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SANCTUARY

(A DETECTIVE STORY)

BY

WILLIAM · HAMILTON · OSBORNE

"THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN SHADOWS," by Charles F. Oursler, Is Our Next Feature

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SANCTUARY

A DETECTIVE STORY

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

SHIOSUKE tiptoed into the room with the delicacy of a little oriental mouse. He bowed apologetically.

"Yessa," he announced, "po-leece-man's come."

"What—again?" demanded O'Hara, half angrily.

"Yessa," returned Shiosuke. He drew his lips back from his white teeth and snarled softly in accord with his master's frown. He contorted his lithe body deftly into a jiu-jitsu posture.

"Shell I t'row 'im out?" he queried, with a dangerous little laugh.

"Not this time," replied O'Hara, with a weary sigh. "Better show him in."

A moment later the detective sergeant entered, bowed stiffly toward O'Hara and O'Hara's guest, and stood at attention. O'Hara nodded toward a chair.

"Sit down, Glover," he commanded. "What's the row?"

Glover accepted a cigar. "Ye're wanted," he returned.

"Godfrey," cried O'Hara, with annoyance in his tone, "can't they leave a man alone now and then—on a holiday, to say the least. Beside, I've got a friend." He waved his hand toward his guest. "Mr. Lancaster," he said, "this is Detective Sergeant Glover of headquarters. Whenever I get on a smoking-jacket, Detective Sergeant Glover insists on butting in."

"Can't be helped," said the detective sergeant, shrugging his shoulders. "The trouble is I'm on the Saltonstall case yet, and——"

"You're big enough to take care of it," O'Hara assured him lazily.

"Big enough for that," returned the sergeant. "That ain't the point. I'm full up. Beside, this other is a case for you."

"What other?" asked O'Hara, leaning forward, with a trace of interest in his eyes.

Glover involuntarily crossed himself.

"It's a murder case," he exclaimed angrily, his fingers twitching. "The foul fiend get the black scoundrel that did it. I'd like to get my hands on him myself."

"Murder," said O'Hara. "Where?"

"At the Leonardi Home——"

"——for Orphans," interposed O'Hara. "When did it happen?"

"Not an hour ago," went on the sergeant. "It came over the wire. You've got to go, Mr. O'Hara," he pleaded. "We've not a soul to send—there's no time to lose."

"Who's murdered?" queried O'Hara.

Again Glover crossed himself. "The finest young saint God ever made—it's Sister Mary Agnes lies choked up there to-day."

O'Hara started. He leaped to his feet and drew off his coat. "Sister Mary Agnes!" he exclaimed. "Why, she's the heroine of that fire they had last week." He turned swiftly to his guest. "You read about her, Lancaster—the Orphan Asylum fire? You remember, she got them all out, every one. Nobody knows how."

"It was the love of the children for her, an' her love for them," interposed the sergeant huskily, "and now some black-hearted assassin has done for her. You'll go, Mr. O'Hara?" he queried.

O'Hara had already seized his hat and stick. "I'll go to it, Glover," he said. "You can go your ways." Glover went, and O'Hara turned back to Lancaster. "Make yourself at home, here at the Barristers', Lank," he exclaimed. "I'll phone you in an hour; I'll make a try for dinner, if not, for supper anyhow. Sorry, but it can't be helped." He stopped short. Lancaster was looking curiously at him. "Great Scott," went on O'Hara, "you don't mean to say you want to come along?"

"Been aching for the chance to see something in your line," said Lancaster.

"Godfrey," returned O'Hara, "then for cat's sake come along." He fumbled in a desk-drawer, found two small shiny, nickel-plated shields, pinned one on Lancaster's negligee shirt underneath his waistcoat, and another on himself.

"Sister Mary Agnes," he said softly to himself; "it don't seem right somehow."

A group of idlers, lounging about the entrance of the Leonardi Home, fell back as they approached. A sudden silence fell upon the group, succeeded by a whispering murmur, as they passed.

"That's O'Hara goin' in," said somebody quite audibly.

"Ah," said another, "it's good they sent him. The right man in the right place."

The wide door of the main building of the Leonardi Home opened before them and O'Hara and his friend passed in. The passageway was dim, and for a moment Lancaster could not distinguish the features of the individual who had admitted them.

"I'm Enders," a hoarse voice whispered into O'Hara's ear.

As Lancaster's eyes accustomed themselves to the gloom, he became aware that the owner of the voice was a somewhat bent old man, with huge round shoulders. He motioned them into an ante-room. But O'Hara still stood in the hallway.

"Do you always keep it dark like this?" he asked.

"Always," croaked Enders.

"Where does the passageway lead?"

"If you hold to it, straight through, it leads to the grounds. It's tapped on all sides along the way by rooms."

O'Hara and his guest followed the old man into the ante-room. As their conductor led them on, Lancaster noted that his hands were large and knotted, like the gnarled branches of a tree. He waved them to chairs.

"You're to see the Mother Superior first," he said.

O'Hara shook his head. "We're to see you first," he returned, fastening his glance upon the old man. "When did you last see Sister Mary Agnes?" he went on.

The old man looked at the clock. "It was not two hours ago, sir," he returned, his voice lowering to a hoarse whisper, "and it wasn't more nor a quarter of an hour before they picked her up."

"Where did they pick her up?"

The old man started from his chair toward another door.

"Sit still," said O'Hara. "Just answer—do nothing else. Where did they find her?"

"The farthest corner of the grounds," said Enders.

"And before that you saw her where?"

"In that there passageway," said Enders.

"The dark passageway?"

"Yes."

"Alone?"

"I was alone, sir."

"But she?"

"Not she; some one was with her—there were two of them."

"Two beside her?"

"No, only one beside her. As they came through I said to myself: 'There they goes—Sister Mary Agnes and Sister Martina'."

"Sister Martina?" said O'Hara, sharply.

The old man spread his hands.

"Afterwards I wasn't sure whether it was Sister Martina or Sister Eugenia—not sure, I wasn't, which."

"It was one of them?" queried O'Hara.

"I should say so—yes," returned Enders, thinking hard, trying, apparently, to reason something out with himself.

"Did you see Sister Martina or Sister Eugenia go out again?"

"Not sure of that," returned the old man.

O'Hara was silent for a moment.

"Have you any theory as to how it happened?"

"Only she were choked to death in the farthest corner of the grounds."

"Any theory as to who did it?"

The old man leaped to his feet.

"It was that black-hearted scoundrel with the brown beard," he cried, thrusting his arms into the air. "If I could only get my hands on him, the black-hearted wretch."

"Sit down," commanded O'Hara sharply. "Who is this brown-bearded man?"

"Him with the wild, murderous eyes," Enders cried.

"You have seen him, then?" demanded O'Hara.

Enders trembled in his rage.

"Ah," he cried, "wasn't he here this very day—three hours ago or so!"

"He was here?"

"Didn't I talk to him?" demanded Enders.

"Where did you talk to him?"

"Right in this here room. He sat in that there chair; he kept askin' for her, he kept jumpin' up an' runnin' to the door an' his eyes were wild an' wilder all the time; he said he was here for to see her—he had authority for to see her, an' he must see her."

"See whom?"

"Sister Mary Agnes, of course."

"Did he seem insane, so far as you observed?"

Old Enders shook his head.

"No—only kind o' wild an' eager."

"When did he leave?"

"Nobody knows. I left him a minute. And I came back. I saw Sister Mary Agnes and Sister Martina goin' along the corridor, an' then it all came about—next I heard he had murdered her."

"Who saw her killed?"

"Nobody. They found her there, that's all."

"Who was the man?"

"Don't know his name, but he's the same man, sir."

"What same man?"

"The same un that tried to touch her in the street two times."

"Was she alone on those occasions?"

"She wasn't often alone—there was some Sister with her always. I don't know was it Sister Martina or who."

"That's all you know?"

"Can't think of any more," responded old Enders, his hand straying to his head.

"I should like to see the Mother Superior, if you please," said O'Hara, rising, "and while she comes, please direct me to your telephone."

He had finished telephoning when the Mother Superior entered. She was a slender, noble-looking woman, with a fine face. Her eyes were wet with tears. She was trembling with grief and excitement. O'Hara introduced himself and Lancaster.

"I should like to see Sister Mary Agnes," said O'Hara.

The Mother Superior led them to the dim passageway, through it, and paused before the last door on the right-hand side.

"Enter," she commanded.

As they were about to obey there was a sudden scuffling sound from the corner of the room, and a frightened urchin darted past them. O'Hara caught him deftly. The boy whimpered and dug his fist into his eyes.

"She was good to me," he wailed. "Please lemme go. I wasn't doin' anything. Honest, I wasn't. She was good to me, that's all."

O'Hara held him for a moment and looked him over. He was a narrow-faced lad, and his hair was close cut to his head. O'Hara caught him gently by the chin and looked, quite as gently, into his eyes. Not once did the whimpering lad meet his gaze. He only squirmed and wriggled. O'Hara passed his hand over the boy's shaven poll, as though in play, and set him down upon his feet.

"I'm not goin' to eat you, little un," he whispered. "You can go."

He glanced after the boy as the boy made off. Then he looked swiftly into the faces of Lancaster and the Mother Superior.

"Sister Mary Agnes was very fond of him," said the Mother Superior. "No mother could have been more kind."

"Has he relatives?" queried O'Hara, interested.

The Mother Superior shook her head.

"He's a child without a record," she said softly, sorrowfully.

"Poor little chap," whispered O'Hara. "It would be far better for him if he were but dead."

The Mother Superior started.

"Sir," she cried, "I have heard Sister Mary Agnes say that thing of him so many times."

"She must have known, she must have understood," murmured O'Hara half to himself.

A moment later they were standing, silent, speechless, above a silent figure.

"She was very beautiful," sighed O'Hara.

"Ah," replied the Mother Superior, "as good as she was beautiful."

O'Hara stared as though fascinated, at the white, placid, upturned face. He bent down suddenly and sniffed the air. Then he straightened up.

"Mother," he said, "I am asking nothing that the law does not demand."

"I invoke the law, sir," said the Mother Superior.

"May I be allowed to see her chin?"

"The marks," answered the Mother Superior, "are on her forehead."

"Her chin first," returned O'Hara gently.

The Mother Superior gently drew away a white cloth. O'Hara stooped and examined carefully the contour of the nose and chin.

"Now, if you please," he said, "the forehead and her ears."

Another stiff, white bandage was tenderly removed. Lancaster started back with a cry of pity. Across the white forehead were the deep marks of heavy, brutal fingers.

O'Hara seemed scarcely to notice them. He was busily engaged with something else—he seemed to be making mental measurements of some kind.

"No wonder she was interested in the boy," he said gently. "She had the instinct of maternity well developed."

The Mother Superior did not hear him. She was standing motionless, with hands and eyes uplifted, breathing prayers.

There was a touch on O'Hara's arm. A man with a pointed beard had entered noiselessly—was standing silently, looking on.

O'Hara held out his hand and grasped this other man's.

"Doctor," he exclaimed, eagerly. Then he nodded toward the placid face of Sister Mary Agnes. "You worked over her?" he queried.

The physician nodded. "For an hour at least."

"You tried heart massage?"

"Everything."

"Death was instantaneous?" asked O'Hara.

"Absolutely."

"I am right then," queried O'Hara, "in assuming it was hydrocyanic gas?"

"That's the strange part of it," said the doctor. "First, how was it conveyed; second, why did it overcome but one of the two principals?"

"Were there two?" Lancaster found himself asking suddenly.

O'Hara plucked his arm and whispered:

"The marks upon the forehead, you remember?"

O'Hara turned to the Mother Superior.

"May we ask Enders to take us through the grounds?" he queried.

A few moments later the old man led them to a secluded spot.

"Sister Mary Agnes' favorite place," he whispered. "It was here she walked alone."

O'Hara looked about him. Two sides of this nook were closed in by the corner of a high surrounding wall. A clump of lilac bushes cut off the view in another direction; everywhere was silence, solitude.

"It was here they picked her up?" asked O'Hara.

"The very spot," he said.

O'Hara crept crouching up and down the space. Fortunately the dense shade had discouraged the growth of grass, though moss was prevalent. Suddenly he beckoned to Lancaster.

"Look here," he said; "what do you make of those?"

"Footprints," said Lancaster at length.

"Ah," returned O'Hara; "and whose?"

Lancaster examined them again, both in the moss and upon the bare ground.

"The big, broad heel of a man," he said, "and the high heels of a woman."

O'Hara smiled.

"Quite sure?" he asked.

"Quite," returned Lancaster.

"We'll measure them," went on O'Hara, "and we'll keep our measurements."

He did so. As he was doing so, the last rays of the dying sun crept into the secluded nook. O'Hara looked up and started.

"Something sparkled in the sunlight," he exclaimed. He sprang across the lawn. "Something here," he said. He stooped again and scooped something into his hand and held it there. He looked about him once more, darted to a bush and drew forth a tiny crumpled mass. Twice more he crept about the open space, inch by inch, and twice more stooped and clutched something in his hand.

Then he led the way swiftly to the main building of the home. The Mother Superior awaited them.

"You have found——?" she asked.

O'Hara held up his hand.

"May we see Sister Martina?" he asked.

Sister Martina was summoned and she came. O'Hara's eyes kindled with satisfaction as he looked upon her. She was tall, more stately than the Mother Superior, and of fuller habit. Enders, though round-shouldered, was a fairly big man, and Sister Martina was as tall as he. She wore rubber-rimmed glasses. Her face, too, was a kindly one.

"Sister Martina," said O'Hara suddenly, "you saw this bearded man they talk about?"

"Yes," she answered, clasping and unclasping her hands. "Yes, twice, on the street. This very week. He caught Sister Mary Agnes by the arm; he was a big man."

"A beard?"

"Yes. I didn't look but an instant. He said they had told lies of him—lies; that she must hear the truth. She wouldn't hear. I got her away. She cried."

"Did she tell you anything about him?"

"No. She only cried."

"About herself?"

"No."

"May I talk to Sister Eugenia?" asked O'Hara. "Or, wait," he added, as Sister Martina was about to leave the room, "you didn't pass through the corridor to-day with Sister Mary Agnes—not that you remember?"

"I know that I did not," she returned.

Lancaster started as Sister Eugenia entered. She might have been twin-sister of Sister Martina, for she, too, was tall and large and matronly; she, too, had a gentle face; she, too, wore rubber-rimmed glasses. She shook her head when questioned. She had not come in with Sister Mary Agnes that day.

"It might have been Sister Beatrice," suggested the Mother Superior.

"Is Sister Beatrice as tall as you?" asked O'Hara.

The face of the Mother Superior relaxed.

"We call her the pint of heavenly sweetness," she returned, "she is so small."

"Don't send for her," said O'Hara. "Mother," he went on, "may I ask you and Sister Eugenia to pass along the corridor, side by side, just for a moment? Enders, look on."

Enders watched. As he watched, Lancaster saw something struggling into the old man's memory. His face lightened.

"Couldn't have been Sister Eugenia, nor Sister Martina," he mused. "It was somebody more mussed up, and the cloth, that wasn't dull—it was shiny; shiny, I remember that."

"Did this individual have her hands to her face?" asked O'Hara.

Once more Enders started.

"Now that you mention it—she did," he said.

O'Hara turned to Lancaster.

"Lancaster," he said, crisply, "please get me headquarters on the phone, and right away."

Lancaster obeyed, standing at the telephone while O'Hara gave his instructions in a low tone of voice. These were the instructions, given without uncertainty, and received without quibble:

"Call at every drug-store and saloon within a radius of quarter of a mile from here, and find out whether a person, male or female, clad in a faded old red cloak, stopped there, feeling faint. This person was dressed in woman's clothes and had a smooth face. He or she wore high-heeled shoes or cowboy's riding boots—small heels, you understand. One or the other. And report to me. Anywhere you can find me—probably Goulet's. Good-by."

When once more they were in the presence of the Mother Superior, O'Hara opened his left hand, which until now he had held closed, and dropped upon the table a dozen bits of flimsy crystal that sparkled in the lamp-light, for dusk had settled down within the room. From his pocket he drew forth a bit of linen, passed it twice before his face, coughed slightly, and then shook the bit of linen from its crumpled folds. It was a handkerchief. From it there rained upon the table a little shower of fragments, bits of flimsy crystal.

Lancaster examined them.

"Mica!" he exclaimed.

O'Hara spread the linen handkerchief upon the table. It was plain and unembroidered, but in one corner, done in India ink, were three letters—M. A. B.

"Mother," said O'Hara, "can you send for one of Sister Mary Agnes' handkerchiefs, if you please?"

"I shall go myself," replied the Mother Superior.

While she was absent O'Hara tossed the handkerchief to Lancaster.

"The letter B," he said, "has been on there for months. The letters M. A. have been added recently."

"The mica?" queried Lancaster.

"Forty years ago and more," O'Hara said, "the belles of fashion used to affect a peculiar fad—a perfumery fad. They carried with them—what did they call them?—'scent drops,' 'grapes'—what not. Hermetically sealed fragile glass phials containing cologne. At the opera a woman would take one from her purse or bag, place it in her handkerchief, crush the handkerchief in her hand. The phial smashed. The perfume was absorbed. The glass remaining in the kerchief she shook from it with a sudden flit. It was a fad that died."

"It has been revived to-day?" asked Lancaster.

"Here, and to-day," assented O'Hara; "only the assassin used hydrocyanic gas instead of perfume. It was all over in a moment. The victim was held at arm's length with a powerful grip upon the forehead, and the handkerchief crushed suddenly against her mouth. The gas did the rest."

"Why at arm's length?" queried Lancaster.

"Otherwise," said O'Hara, "even in the open air, two would have dropped dead instead of one."

The Mother Superior returned.

"The first object that I saw in the room of Sister Mary Agnes was this newly-ironed kerchief, folded in this book.

I brought both just as I found them—she had used it as a book-mark for the time being, so it seems."

She was right. A neatly-folded handkerchief protruded from the book.

"Godfrey," muttered O'Hara to himself.

He was looking at the book, not at the kerchief. The latter he shook from its folds and held it toward the Mother Superior.

"The regulation kerchief, is it not," he asked, "marked in the regulation way?"

"Yes," she answered; "the initials are M. A."

O'Hara tossed it to Lancaster.

"Compare it with the other handkerchief," he requested. Then he turned back to the book.

It was a slender volume—Spangenthal's "Tendency to Crime." O'Hara turned to the pages held open by the handkerchief. A few lines were pencil-marked. He read them to himself:

" . . . an unknown quantity. Like diseases of the blood, its course is uncertain, its career riotous. True that its operation may be suspended for a generation—for generations—by prosperity, by habit, by environment. But its reappearance is inevitable. It is bred in the bone—it is bound to come out in the flesh."

O'Hara glanced curiously at the Mother Superior.

"Can you show me other books of hers?" he asked.

A moment later his eyes opened the wider. Before him on the table there lay four other volumes, each giving evidence of having been well read: Von Minden's "Heredity," the same author's "Environment," Fournier's "Studies in Crime," and a late book by a well-known surgeon on "Eugenics."

O'Hara, with a puzzled look at Lancaster, gently pushed the books to one side. Then he thrust his hand once more into his coat pocket. From it he drew two other objects—a bit of paper and a bit of cloth.

"Mother," he said, "examine that cloth well. Do you know that cloth?"

The Mother Superior examined it. It was red and faded. She laid it once more on the table.

"I do not know it," she returned.

"Now, watch," said O'Hara.

He placed the piece of paper on the table—it was a mere scrap—and the piece of cloth he placed on top of it. The one was the exact shape of the other.

"At some time or other during that unseen interview," said O'Hara, "Sister Mary Agnes clutched at the other person's cloak—probably in her death agony. The cloth was rotten. A piece of it came away, and with it a portion of a letter in the pocket of the cloak. This is the portion of the letter. Look at it."

They looked. It was small and irregular, and written only on one side. Upon that side two words were decipherable—only two—as thus:

———Creed———
———Monaker———

O'Hara's eyes twinkled.

"What do you make of it?" he asked of Lancaster. Lancaster shook his head.

"I don't——" he began—he did not finish. There was a hurried clang of the bell at the front door and a loud hubbub from without—a storm of angry voices. Old Enders sprang from the room, darted to the front door, and then, uttering a loud and angry exclamation, was swept back into the corridor.

Five officers, in plain clothes, but with badges pinned to their breasts and with short sticks in their hands, tumbled pellmell into the passageway, and then fought like fiends to close the door. Over their heads O'Hara could see a surging, swaying multitude without—a multitude beside itself.

"Hang him!"

"Lynch him!"

"Burn him—the dog!"

In the midst of it the door closed, the officers struggled to their feet. O'Hara's eyes glistened.

"You've got him, have you?" he said. "I knew he'd come back. Where did you land him?"

One of the officers, still panting for breath, nodded.

"We lay—for him—outside. He came—and rung—the bell. We nailed him—and then—the crowd——"

"I knew he'd come back," repeated O'Hara. He stared straight into the eyes of their prisoner, a man, tall, rangy, with a scraggly brown beard—a man with an eye a bit wild. The man looked from face to face belligerently. Then he caught sight of the Mother Superior. He crossed himself.

"I beg your pardon, Mother," he exclaimed.

O'Hara's voice was extremely mild.

"Sit down, Mr.—er——" he began.

The man nooded.

"Creed is my name," he answered. He sat down.

As he did so, he plucked nervously at his beard. O'Hara watched the action.

Suddenly the telephone bell rang. O'Hara turned again to Lancaster.

"It will be from headquarters," he said; "a report probably. Tell them to send up a fresh squad of uniforms and to clear the street—gently, though," he added, "and get me the report word for word."

It was headquarters, and headquarters had a report to make. "Bergfield's Drug Store on Division street," reported headquarters, "says yes. A person came in there this afternoon. Wanted a heart stimulant—was given brandy. Was sent to a doctor—didn't go. We got the doctor's name. Wore a red cloak—faded, all right. Big person—smooth face. Don't know whether a man or a woman. Didn't notice as to feet. That's all. No clue. She went."

When Lancaster returned, O'Hara was alone at the table, facing the man Creed. The Mother Superior had gone and the plain-clothes men were nowhere to be seen. Even Enders had effaced himself.

Creed's head had dropped upon his arm. When Lancaster came in, Creed looked up—there was haunting misery in his eyes.

"They lied about her first—an' then they lied about me to her—an' then they went and killed her," he cried.

"Who killed her?" asked O'Hara.

"I don't know," said Creed.

"What do you know?" asked O'Hara.

Creed struck the table with his hand.

"I know I loved the ground she walked on—I know that much. And I've been doing it for years. And I know something more; I know she was for me—and she knew it, too. Seven years ago and more I met her, and we kept each other company."

"How did you meet her?" queried O'Hara.

Creed nodded.

"It was all straight," he said. "I worked for him—Bourbonville——"

O'Hara started to his feet.

"Bourbonville," he cried. "And who was Bourbonville?"

"Her father, of course—the chemist," responded Creed.

"I worked for him a year. And then he died, and then she turned me off—wrote me there was no use. I could stop seeing her for good and all."

"Have you that letter?" asked O'Hara.

Creed had it and produced it.

"What then?" queried O'Hara.

"I kept on, and then they wrote me letters, nasty ones, to make me keep away."

"Who did?"

"Nobody knows. There's one of the letters there—you can look it over."

O'Hara laid it side by side with the first. His lips twitched as he examined it. "Any more?" he queried.

Creed had three more. He produced them all.

"You got none of these before Bourbonville died?"

"None—they all came afterwards. And then I found out just the other day the biggest lie of all. They told her I was married and had children—they told her that. I don't know who, I tell you. It came to me by rumor. For five years I wandered about on the face of the earth, waitin' and hopin'. Then I found out this biggest lie and I came back—and I saw her"—he crossed himself again. "She was a nun, and she wouldn't let me talk. I wanted to explain—to say how I'd been true, but she wouldn't hear a word."

"She was right," said O'Hara; "you were wrong. She had taken certain vows."

"Ah," said Creed, "I wouldn't have interfered; I only wanted her to know about the lies."

"Creed," said O'Hara, "let me read from these four letters you have produced. The first, written six years ago, is from her, and tells you you must cease your visits. The second is from 'A Friend', and tells you she is no fit wife for you. Who wrote that; do you know?"

"No," said Creed, his face flushing.

"The third tells you that she knows well you are after her money—so does the fourth. Who wrote them; do you know?"

Again Creed shook his head.

O'Hara tapped the table impatiently.

"Did she have money?" he queried.

"Search me," responded Creed. Old Bourbonville may have left some, but I never knew about it, if he did. I tell you," he added, the life gone out of his voice, "they had no right to interfere—they had no right."

At Goulet's, over a late lunch that night, O'Hara, having safely disposed of Creed at headquarters, once more placed some of his evidence before Lancaster.

"These four letters are interesting exhibits, Lancaster," he said. "Glance at the first one signed by Miss Bourbonville herself, in which she tells him he must come no longer. Read it, have you? Look at the second, signed 'A Friend', in which some one says she is no fit wife for him. Does it surprise you to know that she wrote both these herself?"

"I know she didn't," returned Lancaster.

"She did," persisted O'Hara. "She was a clever penman. Any expert will tell you that she did. Now, look at these letters three and four—what do you say to those?"

"She may have done those too," said Lancaster.

"Never," said O'Hara. "They were done by some one else."

"By whom?"

"By the individual who wrote the words 'Creed' and 'Monaker' on this little scrap of paper. By the way, you know the word 'Monaker', do you not?"

"Not," returned Lancaster.

"'Monaker'," said O'Hara, "in the vernacular of thieves, means, roughly speaking, 'name'."

Lancaster raised his eyebrows.

"Thieves!" he exclaimed.

O'Hara shook his head.

"We're going along too fast, friend Lancaster," he said. "There's something that we've got to reason out first. Why was it that immediately upon the death of old Bourbonville there was so much objection to this man Creed? What was there that she objected to, and somebody else objected to? What did she and somebody else find out on Bourbonville's death that caused this sudden change?"

Lancaster smiled.

"Probably that he left a lot of money," he ventured.

"Good answer," said O'Hara. He drained his coffee cup. "By the way, Lancaster," he drawled, "it may interest you to know who this old Bourbonville was."

"A chemist—so said Creed."

"Something more," went on O'Hara. "Bourbonville and his brother—they are both dead now—were the greatest forgers and counterfeiters of their time."

"Phew," said Lancaster, in a long-drawn whistle, "we're as far from it as ever."

"From what?" queried O'Hara.

"The problem as to who killed Sister Mary Agnes of the Home."

"On the contrary," returned O'Hara, "your apt suggestion brings us nearer all the time. Probably Peter Bourbonville left a lot of money. Let's wait and see."

It was a week later that Lancaster was called up by O'Hara on the telephone.

"Hello," said O'Hara, "have you read the New York paper that I sent you yesterday?"

"Why, yes," said Lancaster; "did you send it?"

"I did, but apparently you didn't read it—you'll never make an old maid, Lank. You missed one column."

"Which?"

"The death column."

"Wait a bit," said Lancaster, "I'll look it up."

He got the newspaper and scanned its columns carefully. Finally he found it:

DIED.—BOURBONVILLE, Stephen J., in his seventieth year. Funeral at his late residence, 'The Interboro,' No. 327 East ———, Manhattan, on Wednesday, at three p. m. Relatives and friends invited.

Lancaster went back to the telephone.

"I owe you an apology," O'Hara said to him. "I told you they were both dead. They weren't. Stephen J. was still alive. But he's dead now. The Bourbonvilles are extinct. The name, the blood, die with this man."

"What killed him—cyanide?"

"Not a bit of it," returned O'Hara. "He died a natural death."

"Sure?" asked Lancaster.

"Sure as guns," replied O'Hara; "most natural death in the world. He died of old age. I'm going to New York to the funeral. Do you want to come along?"

"Do I?" returned Lancaster. "I'll jump at the chance."

"Will you, honestly?" said O'Hara. "All right. I'll call for you in an hour. A word. Root out your hammerless. You may need it before you're through."

Four hours later O'Hara and his friend were sitting in a stuffy little parlor in a highly respectable apartment on the upper east side in New York, listening to the business-like tones of a metropolitan clergyman as he disposed of the future of Stephen J. Bourbonville. Lancaster looked about him. There was a fair-sized crowd to pay the last honors to Stephen J. There were, it is true, but two women, but there were many men—men of sober, sad-visaged faces, who blinked in sympathy as the preacher talked.

Finally an undertaker stepped forward and arranged matters audibly in the usual way. In due course the last remains of Stephen J. were borne out of the door, the bearers shuffled along the hallway.

Then, like a thunder-clap, things happened.

One of the two women had started from the room when she was dragged swiftly back and thrown violently upon a sofa. The door was slammed to. A revolver shot was heard. In an instant the air bristled with guns. Pandemonium reigned.

In the midst of it O'Hara strode to where the woman lay captive, and tore the veil from her face.

"That's she," he said exultantly. "Look out for her. Bind her hand and foot and let her sit up."

They obeyed him. Her captors were all burly men, and gazed at her long and interestedly.

"I was right, wasn't I?" asked O'Hara.

"Sure you were," returned one of them. "That's Jane Morecraft all right. I ain't seen her in a dozen years."

Another struggled to the fore.

"Let me look at her hands," he said. "Ah," he went on, as he caught sight of those powerful members, "she's Jane Morecraft."

Again O'Hara nodded.

"Where's the red cloak?" he demanded. A New York sleuth opened his coat and unwound a ragged garment from his person. O'Hara fitted a scrap of cloth to it, drew out a letter from the pocket and fitted a scrap of paper to the letter.

"Now show me the laboratory," he exclaimed.

When they were on their way home that evening, Lancaster let himself loose in a torrent of cross-examination.

"Who is Jane Morecraft?" he inquired.

"Perfectly respectable woman," returned O'Hara, "save for her tendency to crime. She's Stephen J. Bourbonville's wife—or widow now. Only she probably has a dozen hold-ups, maybe a homicide or two, beside this one, to her credit."

"And she killed Sister Mary Agnes?"

"Did it as one could brush away a fly," returned O'Hara.

"But she didn't kill her husband?"

O'Hara shook his head.

"She probably loved him," he conceded.

"Why then did she kill Sister Mary Agnes?" queried Lancaster.

"You answered that yourself," said O'Hara. "Because of the money Peter Bourbonville left. He left it in a peculiar way. He had made a fortune plying his nefarious trades—forging and counterfeiting. He came out and was forced to settle down—everywhere he went was the dead line for him. He became a chemist. When he died he left a will——"

"A peculiar will?" asked Lancaster.

"No," returned O'Hara. "Simple enough. His daughter was to have the income until she was thirty. Then she was to have the principal. If she married before thirty, she was to have the principal. If she died, leaving children, before thirty, the children were to have the principal. But if she died unmarried before thirty, the principal was to go to Stephen J. Bourbonville, his brother. Sister Mary Agnes would have been thirty years of age to-day."

Lancaster was getting interested.

"On Peter's death two different people found out two different things," said O'Hara. "Sister Mary Agnes, who was not Sister Mary Agnes then, discovered that her father was a notorious criminal, and Stephen J., a daring criminal himself, discovered that his brother had amassed a fortune and had left a will. The Bourbonvilles were not murderers, you will understand. But Stephen J. had married a murderess—Jane Morecraft, of New York."

O'Hara's auditor nodded, but made no comment.

"There were things to be considered. First, Peter's daughter was not to marry. Both Stephen J. and his wife recognized that fact. And there was great danger that she would. Here was this young and respectable chemist, Creed, who had enlisted her affections. He must be discouraged. They started in to discourage him. Here they found an unexpected ally. Peter's daughter refused him consistently after Peter's death."

"Why?" asked Lancaster.

"Ah," returned O'Hara, "for the same reason that she entered the portals of the church. She understood her danger. She had been born a criminal. She had the instincts of a criminal, though she had never committed any crime. She did the only thing there was to do. She lifted her face heavenward—she declined to perpetuate the race. How much discouragement she gave Creed and how much they did, it is quite certain that Creed finally went away—to the ends of the earth, perhaps. Years after, he came back."

"Meantime Jane Morecraft had done nothing?" queried Lancaster.

O'Hara nodded.

"She tried to do many things, doubtless, but the entrance of Peter's daughter into the church came like a streak of lightning out of a clear sky. If Peter's daughter survived thirty, Peter's daughter would will her all to the church. Stephen J. and his wife understood that. If she died before thirty she would have nothing to will to the church. But the sisters of the Leonardi Home were difficult of approach. One might strike one down in the street, but one could not get away. Besides, there was the single motive all the while."

"I see," said Lancaster.

"The new advent of Creed simplified matters. Jane Morecraft had her own accomplice near the Home, who kept her, for a consideration, well informed. This accomplice also had aided in the discouragement of Creed years before. This accomplice knew that Creed had come back, that he had attempted to speak to Sister Mary Agnes, that he had been seen. She communicated with Jane Morecraft."

The detective's friend was becoming deeply absorbed. O'Hara went on:

"Still, Jane Morecraft would have held her hand save for one thing—Stephen J. Bourbonville was liable to die at any moment. If he died before Sister Mary Agnes, where would Jane Morecraft come in? And one may be sure that Jane was always thinking first of Jane, and next of Stephen J. She determined to execute a bold move. She came from New York without warning, except for a little necessary preparation in the laboratory—the Bourbonvilles were always great for laboratories. She wore her old red cloak, reversed it, with its black lining outside, sought Sister Mary Agnes on the street, probably pretended illness, introduced herself, entered the Leonardi Home with her for a few moments, drew her into the garden—and accomplished the rest. It were her high-heeled shoes, it were Sister Mary Agnes' broad, common-sense walking boots, that made their several impresses on the mould. It was her strong hand that bruised the forehead of one of the bravest young victims that was ever stricken down."

"How did you solve all this?" queried Lancaster.

"There's no solution to it," returned O'Hara. "I did what you said. I practically followed the money of Peter Bourbonville. As it turned out, there was no other mo-

tive—there could be none. I found the motive in the county record, leaped to a single conclusion, set a New York sleuth to work, and got the evidence."

"You did not suspect Creed?"

"Hardly," returned O'Hara. "Before I'd seen him it occurred to me that a man who had acted as he had would hardly resort to poison. It is not the instrument of passion—anger."

"After you saw him?" queried Lancaster.

O'Hara shook his head.

"Creed is a good Catholic," he said, "and besides, he loved Sister Mary Agnes. A man like that doesn't strike down the thing he loves."

Lancaster lost himself in thought for a long while, while the Limited ate up the long miles like fire.

"There's one thing I've forgotten," he said, eagerly, at length, "and that's the boy."

O'Hara smiled, a bit sorrowfully.

"The boy?" he asked.

"The shavy-headed urchin at the Home."

"Ah," returned O'Hara, "there was a bond of sympathy between Sister Mary Agnes and that boy. You recall that Sister Mary Agnes had said, as I had said, that it was far better for him to die, you recall the statement of the Mother Superior to the effect that he was a lad without a record. She was wrong. He had no written record, possibly. That much might be true. But Sister Mary Agnes knew, as well as I knew when I saw his chin and felt his head and ears—she knew that he was tainted as she was tainted, that, willy-nilly, crime was running in his veins. That's all."

It was not all, however. That night at midnight, O'Hara and Lancaster stood facing Creed at headquarters. Creed shook hands with them and started off, dejectedly enough. O'Hara called him back.

"Creed," he said, earnestly, "this is a time when I think you will believe that I am telling you the truth. There's something about this matter that I've discovered, that I know, and that you must believe. Listen. No matter what has happened, Creed, I know that this is so. I know that Sister Mary Agnes loves you now as she has loved you all these years, with a love as eternal and undying as her life itself. Believe."

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QUEER ANTICS OF BIRDS

MERE man, under the spell of love, is commonly supposed to be not quite himself. This might also be said to be true of birds, for at the time of courtship they not only assume quite unwonted attitudes when in the presence of the object of their affection, but in not a few species perform the most astonishing acrobatic feats.

One of the most remarkable illustrations of this fact is furnished by that most interesting bird, the great bustard, which a generation or so ago was more common than now. Even in its sedate moments it is a handsome bird, the back being of a lively ochre, barred with black, while the neck and under parts are of a delicate dove color. The only ornament of the male is formed by a tuft of long feathers extending backward on each side of the head. When in amorous mood these have a rôle of their own, and a by no means inconspicuous one. But the "display," as it is called, of the great bustard is a very ceremonious affair.

The first stage in the proceedings is to inflate a most wonderful windbag, which runs down the front of the neck, just under the skin. How this is done no man can say, but the necessary air is somehow drawn through a slit-like aperture opening just under the tongue. As the process of inflation proceeds the head is drawn down until it rests between the shoulders, the beak pressing down onto its strange air cushion. Meanwhile the feather tufts are raised upward and thrown forward, to stand like a palisade on each side of the beak.

While this is going on the tail is raised and drawn forward until it lies upon the back, where it is held down by the tips of the wing feathers. This brings into view a billowy mass of white feathers formed by the under tail coverts. As the quill feathers are brought into play to hold down the tail, the long, barred "scapulars" and the pure white secondaries are in some mysterious way spread out into a sort of shield, covering each side of the body.

By the time these complex movements are completed a transformation has been effected which is almost indescribable. All likeness to the bird of a few minutes ago has vanished. What remains is a bewildering shimmer of feathers from which proceeds a series of low, guttural sounds like "oak-oak-oak" slowly uttered. As these sounds are uttered this feathered contortionist stands directly in front of his mate, evidently endeavoring to excite her admiration and her consent to his suit.

No other member of the bustard tribe has quite so remarkable a display. But the great Australian bustard makes a good second. With this species the tail is also drawn forward over the back and the neck is inflated, but by a very different means, for it is the gullet and "crop" which are filled with air. At such times the "crop" forms a great pendulous bag, hanging down far below the line of the breast and swaying with the bird's every movement.

The head, however, instead of being drawn down on to the back, is thrust high up into the air, the neck forming a sort of post to which, as it were, it is affixed. In this strange posture the bird struts above with a mincing gait before his commonly passive and apparently indifferent mate. At last, however, his pertinacity is rewarded.

Among birds windbags are by no means rare devices for captivating coy mates. In some species these aids to courtship are bare of feathers and brilliantly colored, as in the case of the strange frigate bird of the tropics. Herein the air vessel forms a great crimson pouch which, when fully inflated, rivals the rest of the body in size.

THE CONSIDERATE BURGLAR

By J. R. WARD

MRS. HARRIETT BAGBY was well known to Detective Woodbury Blair, and consequently, when he was assigned to call at her home on a certain evening, following a very urgent telephone message from the lady conveying the information that her apartment had been ransacked, he did not look forward to his coming investigation with the pleasant anticipations that he usually experienced when about to get on the trail of a crook.

Blair was usually fond of his work. A powerful, thickset man, with vitality and energy in his glance, and years of experience behind him, he allowed nothing to interfere with the accomplishment of his purpose. With a bulkiness that was a matter of broad build, his movements were slow and deliberate, but full of precision. His neck was short and thick, and he accommodated it with a low collar. His face was round and pink, and wrinkled with good humor. Being slow to anger, and possessing a general air of good-fellowship, he was a favorite with all with whom he came in contact, friends and crooks alike.

Mrs. Harriett Bagby was considered well off. She occupied an apartment in the Westmoreland, one of the most fashionable hotel-apartments in the city, with her husband, of whom very little was heard, he being, apparently, completely enveloped in the mist of his wife's glory and prestige. She was a woman of no mean attainments—Blair had to admit that himself. As he remembered her, she was a stout, masculine type of woman, who wore tailor-made skirts, blouses with high, turn-down collars, black ties, and low-heeled shoes. An ardent suffragist, a practical sociologist, and a committee-woman of some prominence, she was at the helm of practically every protest or complaint that was launched in the city. Harriett Bagby's ear was always ready and willing to listen to grievances, and if her interest was aroused, which was the usual thing, no matter how inconsequential the case might be, the determination with which she pushed her campaign would do credit to a legislative office-seeker. Furthermore, she never failed to gain recognition, no matter how trivial the cause might be which she had appointed herself to champion. It was a bold official indeed who dared lock horns with her. Only the week before, Blair recalled the commissioner telling him, in an exasperated moment, that the proper action to take was to change the name of the town to Bagbysville. And furthermore, didn't Blair remember the time that she had given the superintendent of police the jolt of his life by making a public protest against him, which was in turn taken up by the newspapers when stress was made to bear in certain places, and resulted in a public apology from that, in Blair's opinion, very worthy gentleman? The detective remembered her at that time as a large, aggressive, belligerent, and overbearing woman, who conversed in a very loud tone of voice. He recalled particularly her chin, which was even squarer than his own—and he had quite a reputation along that line himself.

And now her apartment had presumably been entered and burglarized, and he, most unlucky of all men, had been assigned to the case. Bemoaning his fate, he made his way through the high-class residential section to the Westmoreland.

Stopping at the entrance to the pretentious apartment house long enough to throw his cigar-stump into the gutter and rearrange his black string-tie, the detective, in by far the most unhappy mood he had experienced within himself for some time, entered the lift and was let out at the fourth floor, where, with grim forebodings, he rapped smartly on the door, which was almost immediately opened by Mrs. Bagby herself. He recognized her at once, and his fears that he was "in for it" were in no wise allayed by his deliberate scrutiny of her stern, cold countenance. He was painfully conscious that hard, gray eyes were peering at him disapprovingly through large horn-rimmed spectacles. He noticed a rather sharp nose, and a firm mouth set in a hard line. From the frown with which she regarded him, he felt somehow inconsequential and intruding.

Gathering himself together, he adopted his most professional attitude, and bowing profoundly, proffered his card.

"Don't you know there is a bell on this door?"

"I beg pardon, ma'am?" he asked.

"I said, don't you know there is a bell on this door?" she demanded, in a harsh tone.

Blair looked at the door jamb stupidly. Sure enough, there was a bell there, but in the dark public hallway, with the apartment-door shut, it could be very easily overlooked.

"No, ma'am; I'm sorry to say that I didn't notice the bell, ma'am," he answered apologetically.

She appeared to be slightly mollified by his attitude.

"Well, there is, and therefore it isn't necessary to knock. Nothing shocks one's nerves more than some stupid person banging on the door. In the future, please ring the bell."

"I hope it won't be necessary, ma'am," he smiled, and bowed again.

"What?" she exclaimed.

"I mean, ma'am, that I hope to have your trouble cleared up on this one visit, and it won't be necessary to bother you again."

Vaguely he felt that he was making a simpleton of himself, and that his language was very ungrammatical. "Most people feel that the less they have to do with detectives, the better," he added, diplomatically.

"No wonder," she shot at him, with a snort of derision. "Absolutely stupid, all of them."

His answer was soft. "We try very hard not to be, ma'am. Now, if you don't mind," he reminded her politely, "won't you tell me what has happened?"

Without further parley, he was ushered through a large hallway, and entered the living-room. Confusion was everywhere. Tables were overturned, chairs were lying on their sides, portieres and curtains were strewn on the floor, pictures were lying face downward, and even the heavy Persian rug had been pulled diagonally across the room. A number of dishes, which had evidently come out of a beautiful china cabinet in the corner of the room, were scattered about, and the cabinet was lying on its side. Blair could see at a glance that the furnishings were sumptuous. The pictures were in oil, the chairs and other furniture were of the finest Circassian walnut, and

the rug floor covering was doubtless very expensive. A window leading to the fire-escape was standing open, its shade lying on the floor.

He had hardly given the room a cursory glance when Mrs. Bagby opened the adjoining door and ushered him into the bed chamber. Here the same state of disorder was evident. The rug was pulled awry as in the other room, the pictures and curtains were down from their places, a chiffonier was facing the wall, the shades were down from the windows, a large quantity of wearing apparel, which had evidently come out of a clothes closet in the corner, the contents of the bureau, and the bed clothing, were scattered over the floor. Blair commented to himself that he had never seen such a state of disorder in his life.

"Miss anything?" he interrogated briefly.

"Miss anything!" she repeated. "If I hadn't missed something I never would have sent for the police, and had them nosing around. The scoundrel stole seven hundred dollars from that top bureau-drawer. That is what I missed."

This explanation was made in a loud voice, which arose in its shrillness and intensity almost to a scream. She practically spat the words into her visitor's face. She waved her arms about frantically, meanwhile yelling maledictions upon the thief. Mr. Blair had seen many hysterical women, but he was sure this one was not suffering from hysteria. She was in a rage, and he could see plainly that she enjoyed the sensation.

He seemed duly impressed. "I just thought I'd ask," he murmured, absently. "Of course," he gave her a lazy smile, "if I hadn't asked I wouldn't know."

"No, and I don't suppose the police will ever know who the scoundrel is that has ruined my beautiful home."

"We will try very hard, ma'am," he promised her.

Inwardly he resolved to ask her nothing more unless it was absolutely necessary. Insults and argumentation seemed to be a disease with this woman, he soliloquized to himself. What kind of a woman was she, anyway, to argue about why you knocked at the door instead of ringing the bell, when her home was at that very moment a mass of wreckage? He guessed seven hundred dollars didn't mean much to this lady. From her attitude he believed she was glad it had happened. It gave her something to talk about. However, if he wanted to make any headway with this case, he would be compelled to handle the lady "with kid gloves." He resolved he wouldn't be browbeaten, but at the same time he realized he would have to ignore her insulting attitude if he wanted to make any headway. He made up his mind he wouldn't interrogate her further if it could be helped.

Crossing the room, he examined the top bureau-drawer, from which she had alleged the money had been taken. A thin instrument similar to a knife-blade had been inserted between the top of the drawer and the frame, and the bolt forced back. Reaching in his pocket, he took out his bunch of keys and inserted one of them into the lock. Again he went over the drawer minutely, and seemingly satisfied with his investigation, arose to his feet and re-entered the living-room.

Stepping to the open window, he examined the ledge carefully with his lens. Emitting a grunt which Mrs. Bagby construed as being an ejaculation of disappointment for something he had failed to find, causing her to snort contemptuously, he clambered out on the iron-work fire escape. He traversed the four flights to the ground, and upon reaching the bottom step, carefully leaned over from his perch and examined the soft earth underneath. Apparently having found what he was looking for, he grunted approvingly, and slowly climbed up to the window from whence he had come.

Puffing laboriously, and very much played out, he managed to drag his huge bulk through the window, and paused for a breathing spell. To walk up four flights of steps was quite a feat for him, especially after just having walked down them. Standing just inside the window, his hat in his hand, he mopped his forehead with his handkerchief, still breathing hard from his recent exertions.

He was destined to be insulted again.

"You are one of the most active members of the force, aren't you?" said the hostess, acidly.

He caught the sarcasm adroitly. "Well, no'm, I wouldn't say that," he replied blandly, smiling at her.

"Evidently you don't have enough to do to keep you in trim," she persisted.

"Well, we're always trying to make people better, ma'am," he told her.

This time her shot was wicked. Nodding her head several times slowly, a grim smile illumined her face for a moment at her own joke. "You must be succeeding wonderfully well."

He grinned amiably. "You mean from my portliness, ma'am?" He pronounced the word with slow deliberation.

"If you call it that."

Blair scratched his gray head a moment before replying. "Did you ever read Shakespeare?" he questioned.

She nodded her head in the affirmative.

"Well, in Julius Caesar he said: 'Bring to me them that are fat'."

This jocularity on his part evidently did not improve the lady's temper one iota. Turning on her heel, she walked to the other end of the room and looked out of the window with a bored expression.

Blair's mouth transformed to a thin, hard line. This was the last straw, he told himself. He wouldn't say another word to this disagreeable woman if he choked. Positively he would not. Here was a woman who made a specialty of making herself as overbearing as possible. No, sir, by the great horn spoon, he was through. If she spoke to him again he wouldn't answer her, no matter what the consequences. Vaguely he wondered where her husband was. He had several questions he would like to ask some one who was reasonable. He wanted to know if anything else was missing from the apartment besides the money, and he wanted to know if there had been any suspicious characters seen about the place. But to ask this woman would be to bring down insult upon himself.

Stepping into the bed-room, he gazed about the top of the bureau. There was a brooch lying on the tray easily worth several hundred dollars, and on the chiffonier, in a small pin-cushion, he discovered a scarf pin, set with a tiny diamond, which, he judged, by its inexpensiveness, must belong to Mr. Bagby. Yes, and there were other articles lying about, also of some value, which apparently hadn't been touched by the intruder. Well, there was one of his questions answered. They hadn't taken anything else but money, as far as he knew. And as to the suspicious characters, he would ask the janitor of the building as he went out. He promised himself he would look up Mr. Bagby in the directory, and see if he couldn't get in touch with him at his business address. Yes, he decided, he would do without Mrs. Bagby's information. Things could be much worse, he consoled himself.

Going back to the living room, humming to himself, he began to examine some of the articles strewn on the floor. Stooping, he picked up a marble bust which was lying face

downward on the floor, having, presumably, fallen from a pedestal of the same material, which was also longwise on the floor. Upon raising the pedestal and setting it aright, his eye caught something on the highly polished floor. Uttering a grunt of exclamation, and getting down on both knees, he examined the area immediately about the pedestal with his lens. Scratching his head in perplexity, he arose to his feet, and striding over to the other end of the room, lifted a large vase from a pile of sundry articles.

"Wonder how this thing fell down without getting broke," he murmured, in a half-whisper, abstractedly.

"What did you say?" Mrs. Bagby had turned about and was regarding him with an imperious air.

"I said you were lucky this didn't get broke," he lied, forgetting his resolution of a moment before.

"Humph."

Blair was glad she hadn't said more. She was just about getting on his nerves, he thought to himself.

He wandered in and out of the two rooms for a few moments longer, examining, in turn, the lock on the window, the various pieces of furniture and bric-a-brac on the floor, and the door leading into the public hallway.

"Not a doggoned dish broke either," he told himself, looking about in perplexity.

After going through the four other rooms of the apartment, which were undisturbed, he was ready to go. Very briefly he advised the lady that he would let her know of his progress in the case, and after a very exhaustive and clumsy search, found his hat, following which he bid her a polite "Good-evening," and took his departure, but not without a parting shot from her.

"I will be surprised if anything comes out of this. The scoundrel who robbed me will doubtless never be brought to justice," she declared.

"Well, we will try very hard, ma'am," he promised her, and went his way.

Before leaving the building he interviewed the janitor and was assured by him that he had seen no suspicious characters about prior to the robbery.

"That lady is surely tearing the roof off the place, though," the janitor confided. "God help that burglar if she ever caught him in the act."

Blair appreciated this piece of witticism on the part of the janitor, but he was conservative and said nothing.

Back in his little cubby-hole of an office at the precinct, he chewed his cigar and pondered. Here was a case, he reflected, that demanded diplomatic handling. Practically no clues of value, and nothing taken but money. Money was next to impossible to identify. If the thief had taken the brooch the case would have presented simpler aspects. His information was very limited, and the only person he had yet interviewed who could give him any seemed to be resolved to impede his progress along that line as effectively as possible. Not that he believed that Mrs. Bagby had willfully made herself disagreeable in order to discourage his interrogations. From all accounts, and from his own opinion of Mrs. Bagby's character, he was confident in his own mind that her attitude was perfectly natural. He realized that he was expected to put forth his best efforts in the solving of this case, that he had to "produce the goods," and be quick about it, or it would be hard to tell just what action she would take. He could draw a rather graphic picture in his mind of a public inquiry as to the incompetency of the police department, with himself as the principal witness, if he didn't "come across."

He failed utterly to locate Mr. Bagby after a very exhaustive search by telephone. In fact, he could procure no information about him. His mind held many conflicting thoughts that evening as he made his way home by a circuitous route. He wanted to look at that apartment again. He had failed to locate Mr. Bagby, and so it seemed to be inevitable that he break his resolution and seek an audience with Mrs. Bagby. There were several leading questions he would like to ask her, and he would, no matter how insulting she was. Yes, that is just what he would do; in fact, he would have to do it. It seemed unavoidable under the circumstances. He would swallow his pride and "face the music."

Thus reasoning with himself, he walked leisurely along the darkening streets and again found himself in front of the Westmoreland. Crossing the street, he finished his cigar under the corner lamp-light, meanwhile surveying the windows in the Bagby flat. The front room, which he recalled as the bed-chamber, was brilliantly lighted, and he discerned some one sitting in the window looking out into the street. At times the figure nodded its head rapidly and waved its arms about in wild gestures. Another figure, which Mr. Blair didn't recognize, seemed to be hurrying about the room, stopping here and there and again mounting a small step-ladder, and at times disappearing into the adjoining room. The watcher grimly concluded to himself that Mr. Bagby had arrived home, and was endeavoring to put things in order under his wife's directions. He could plainly see from her actions that she was "enjoying" a rage similar to the one she had had that evening in his presence.

Suddenly he became aware that he had attracted attention. The figure in the widow had called the other, and they were both looking out, one pointing straight at him, as though directing the other's attention. This was the last thing Blair would have had happen. Drawing his coat-collar up about his face, he left his post and sauntered slowly away. Out of sight of the building, however, he quickened his steps and was soon home, where came the realization that he had not accomplished what he had set out to do. With some heat he acknowledged to himself that he had become rattled when he noticed they had discovered him.

What was the matter with him anyway, he reproved himself. Was he getting to such a point, after years and years of handling tough characters, that he was afraid of a woman's tongue. What did he care? Let her publish him if she wanted to. Everybody who ever had any dealings with him knew that he could "deliver the goods." Let her wag her tongue if she wanted to. He would go see her in the morning, and not only insist upon her answering his questions, but if she got nasty with him, he would give her as good as she sent. He would stand for his right as an officer of the law, and she would either "come across" with all the information he wanted, or—— Well, he'd show her, all right.

Circumstances, however, prevented him from carrying out these bold resolutions, for the next morning when he reported on duty at an early hour, he found that a gentleman had been waiting in his office for some time.

He was a stranger to Blair. A little man in a long black coat, with white side-whiskers, a high collar and a solemn black cravat. His flat-top hat seemed to ridicule his diminutive stature. His air was timid and apologetic, and his faded blue eyes, which were very large, had almost a frightened expression. One of his hands was tightly clasped over the other a little below his waist-line. Somehow Mr. Blair knew who he was at once, although he had never seen him before.

He advanced into the room, and was greeted warmly by the detective, who had arisen from his chair, advancing

toward him with outstretched hand. The little man placed his hand in the big paw limply, and gazed at Blair's good-humored face, as that worthy pumped his hand up and down in a tight clasp which almost paralyzed his arm.

Glancing around, apparently to make sure the door leading into the outer room was shut, and that they were entirely alone, he cleared his throat in an apologetic way, and with the attitude of a man who finds himself in a very embarrassing situation, but who, nevertheless, propounds a dark secret, whispered in the detective's ear.

"I—I am Mr. Bagby, sir!"

This was indeed good news for Blair. Grabbing a chair, he set it beside his visitor. He gave Mr. Bagby to understand that he was very glad to see him, and he hoped that he hadn't been compelled to wait very long. The detective even proffered cigars. His guest politely thanked him, but he didn't smoke. Hadn't smoked for some years, in fact. Not since he had been married.

The visitor was plainly perturbed about something, and even the detective's warm cordiality failed to put him at his ease. He proved to be extremely timid, his eyes dancing about as though on wires every time Blair addressed him. He didn't seem to be able to talk in anything except monosyllables, so great was his confusion. Blair wasn't sure whether his visitor was frightened because he was in that terrible place called a police station, or whether it was his natural expression. He was inclined to believe it was natural. As he thought of the "sweet-tempered" wife his visitor had, he was sure of it. Slowly adopting his best business attitude, he suggested: "You wanted to see me on business, did you, Mr. Bagby?"

The little man again looked furtively about. Again he cleared his throat. "Er—my wife sent me to ask you, sir, if you were watching our home last evening." His voice was still in a half-whisper, and it could plainly be seen that he considered his question a piece of effrontery.

Blair's expression was bewilderment itself.

"Me? Watching your house! Why should I watch your house, my dear sir? I am afraid I don't understand."

The little man arose as if to depart. "My wife sent me to ask," he explained nervously. "She was very much upset about it all night. She was sure she saw you across the street looking up at our rooms." He backed away in the direction of the door.

"I'll tell her it wasn't you, sir."

"She could have called me up and found that out. It wasn't necessary to make a special trip here to find that out, was it?"

"She wouldn't call you up."

"Why?" Blair's eyes held him sternly.

Bagby gulped.

"I'm afraid she disliked the idea." The answer was accompanied by a sickly, nervous smile which was intended to deceive.

"Of talking over the phone to a common detective?" persisted Blair, relentlessly.

"Oh, my; no indeed. I'm sure her idea was——" Bagby glanced about nervously. Blair had an idea he was getting ready to run.

"Now see here," he said, rising and taking the little man gently by the arm. "Let's sit down and talk this little matter over. I'll promise you that it will all be confidential and nobody will ever know the substance of our conversation." He seated himself after making sure that his visitor had quieted down somewhat and was comfortably seated again.

"Now, the facts are these: I called at your home yesterday, and after an investigation tried to get some information about this robbery. I don't mind telling you frankly that I didn't make much headway. Now, you, as a man, know that you can't trace a crime unless you have some information. I am no super-detective and I never get anything out of 'hunches' or any of this clairvoyance that these story-book detectives seem to have at the tips of their fingers. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Bagby, that I am stranded high and dry on this case, and I will have to ask you a few questions before I can proceed further. Yesterday your wife was naturally very upset and nervous about this business. I found it impossible to get her to give me any information that was valuable. Get me?" The detective bent a quizzical eye upon the frightened face before him. Its expression was pitiful, he told himself, but duty was duty. The answer was a distinct surprise.

"I am afraid Harriett was disagreeable, as usual."

Blair immediately warmed up to his visitor.

"I'm mighty glad you understand the situation, Mr. Bagby. You can realize the embarrassing position in which I am placed. You are willing to answer a few questions?"

"Yes, sir." The little man looked at the door longingly, and then, apparently resigned to his fate, sighed.

"Does your wife keep much money in the house?"

"No, sir. The money she lost was only in the drawer since the noon hour, and it was her intention to deposit it in the bank this morning. She never keeps any money in the house except what is in her purse."

"How long was this money in the drawer before she discovered it was gone?"

"From the noon hour until she returned, about three in the afternoon, and discovered it was gone."

"And the whole place upside down," the detective added.

"Yes, sir. Exactly."

"Was there anything else missing besides the money?"

"No, sir."

"Anybody in the house between the time she put the money in the drawer and the time she came home that you know of?"

"No, sir."

"How about your servant?"

"Our servant has been ill for over a week, sir."

"Was there any one else besides your wife who knew the money was in the drawer?"

"No, sir."

"You knew, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir. I was present at the time she put it there."

"What did she do with the key to the drawer?"

"She put it in her purse."

"And following that you both went out?"

"Yes, sir. We both went out together."

"And who returned home first?"

"My wife."

"You were out all afternoon?"

"Yes, sir. With my wife."

"You didn't spend the whole afternoon with your wife, did you?"

"Practically."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I spent about an hour at the Public Library."

"How was it? Explain."

"I accompanied my wife to the Morgan Building, where she was attending a meeting. I left there in about an hour, and went to the Public Library, where I stayed about an hour and a half. Then I returned to the Morgan Building and stayed there the rest of the afternoon."

"The Library is just across the street from the Morgan Building, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"About two blocks from your home, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your wife has a rather large income, hasn't she?"

"Yes, sir. We both have."

"You say you have?"

"Yes, sir. My first wife left me some valuable property."

"Who is your agent?"

"You mean my real estate agent?"

"Yes."

The answer was slow in coming.

"Harriett handles my property for me."

"She makes her returns to you, does she?"

"Well—yes, sir. That is the way it is handled."

Blair felt as though he lied. He lasped into a study, and the silence was unbroken for some minutes. At last he spoke, slowly and deliberately:

"I'll tell you what I think about your case. After my conversation with you, my dear sir, it is comparatively simple. I believe that I can lay my hand on the crook who took your wife's money in a little while."

The little man's eyes opened wide in surprise. "You can?" he exclaimed. "Well, well, well!"

"I'll sum this case up for you," went on the big man, "and tell you what I think of it." He shifted his feet and lit a fresh cigar. "In the first place I think the man who took that money made a big mistake when he opened the window in order to make it appear that he entered in that way. He never came in that way, and he didn't leave that way, either. It rained last night, and the sill was still damp, and there wasn't a mark on it. Furthermore, there is nothing but soft earth under the fire escape, and there weren't any prints there either, and the only way he could get off that ladder was to step on that soft earth, because the ladder going to the ground had a railing."

Blair gazed abstractedly out of the window and went on with his deductions.

"Now, that window is the only way of getting out of your apartment besides the door going into the hallway. He didn't come in the window, so it stands to reason he must have come in through the door."

The little man smiled sadly and sighed again. Blair's eyes were bleary as he looked out through the window into space. He rolled his cigar about between his lips.

"Now, that directs your attention to the door leading into the hall. By the way, Mr. Bagby, you haven't lost your key, have you?"

His listener produced the key. Blair examined it gravely.

"Of course, your wife couldn't have lost hers, because she opened the door to get in when she found the place robbed," he murmured, half to himself.

"I remember her saying that she unlocked the door before she entered."

"Well." Blair had again adopted his lazy drawl, and was again staring out of the window. "Then we will have to believe that somebody managed to get in that door. There is a very complicated lock on it, and furthermore, I examined it very closely, and there wasn't a scratch on it. I am positive that lock was not picked. Therefore, how was it opened?" He answered himself. "By somebody who had a key."

He gave Bagby a lazy glance. "Anybody else have a key besides you and your wife?"

"No, sir. There are only two keys to that door."

"Humph! Well, as I was saying, it stands to reason that the door was opened by a key that fit the lock. Now, we will have to leave that point open for discussion as we take up another point. It sort of had me stumped at first, but I understand it clearly now. I want to say right here that I have seen a great many burglars in my time, but I never saw or heard of any in my life as considerate as the one that visited your place yesterday. He managed to throw things around pretty lively, and still his work was done so carefully that he never broke a thing. He managed to throw dishes and statues and pictures with glass fronts all over the place, and still there wasn't one piece that was injured in the least. He never even scratched the bureau-drawer when he pried it open to get the money. I'll say he was a mighty careful and considerate burglar."

The detective stopped and hunted through his pockets for a match, lit his weed, which had ceased to burn, and continued:

"Yes, sir, whoever it was, he didn't want to injure anything, so instead of knocking them down the way any burglar would do in his haste, he very carefully laid each piece on the floor in order to make it appear like a regular job. It was hardly necessary for him to do the same thing in the living-room, as he didn't take anything but the money, and that was in the bed-room. Therefore, I say, that when we find the bed-room upset it is easily explained, but when we find the other room upset, and nothing besides the money taken, and valuable jewelry lying before his eyes, what are we led to believe?" Blair's eyes regarded the other man quizzically.

"I say, what are we led to believe?" he demanded in a harsh tone.

"I—I am quite sure I—I don't know," replied his visitor breathlessly.

Blair slammed his big hand down on the desk to emphasize his words.

"Merely this," said he, forcibly, "that the fellow who did the job knew when the occupants of the apartment would return, knew he was safe, was sure he had lots of time, and accordingly mussed up the living-room as another throw-off."

Mr. Bagby was sitting on the edge of his chair, his eyes wider than ever, and beads of perspiration on his brow.

"And so," went on Blair, with the comings and goings of the people in the apartment, we have a man who must have had a key to the door, and lastly, we have a man who is very careful not to break or mar anything in the slightest. He actually took a heavy marble pedestal and laid it carefully down on the floor, apparently so he wouldn't break it or scratch the polished floor."

Blair was still gazing out of the window. Slowly, his eyes moved and rested upon his visitor.

"I ask you, Mr. Bagby, why was he so careful?"

"The little man shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

"I—I'm sure I don't know," he said weakly.

"There is only one answer, my friend." The detective was bolder than ever now, and felt victory within his grasp. "Because he was afraid he would have to replace everything he broke, and it isn't human nature for a man to break up his own personal belongings without sufficient provocation. Therefore, our burglar mussed up everything in the room, taking great care to make the job look as big as possible, because he thought it was necessary. If he had not done so he knew where the finger of suspicion would point. Therefore he tried to make it appear as if a professional burglar had entered the apartment through the window, and had ransacked the place, but at the thought of wrecking his beautiful home, and ruining the furniture which his money had bought, he balked, and—there is where he made his mistake."

Bagby slumped in his chair. Blair apparently did not

notice the nervous way his visitor moistened his lips. Calmly he resumed his staring out of the window.

"It means about ten years in the penitentiary," he mused in a low voice, "and I am afraid it will be a very disagreeable task for me to arrest him, mainly because I fully appreciate the position in which he finds himself."

The smaller man's face was a picture of horror.

"Now I'll tell you how I would like you to help me."

Blair's gaze wandered from the window to his visitor's face, who gulped several times convulsively.

"I—I am at your service, sir," he managed to articulate.

Slowly the detective arose from his seat. Slouching over to the little man, he placed his hand, palm upward, before him.

"Give me that money," he said, kindly.

Bagby's face underwent a change. He turned pale; his jaw dropped and his eyes bulged.

"Come on. I know you have it on you. You have been fingering something in your inside coat pocket ever since you have been in the office."

Without a word, the long, bony hand stole into the designated pocket, and withdrawing a large envelope, handed it to the detective.

"You know what this means, don't you?" said Blair, in a low voice.

The words of his visitor were almost inaudible. "I can't help it. I never have had anything of my own for seven years. I haven't had a penny that I didn't have to account for since I have been married. I haven't——"

His voice broke in a pitiful wail, and he covered his face with his bony hands, sobbing convulsively.

Blair did some rapid thinking. He made up his mind suddenly.

Tenderly he took the little man by the arm and led him to the door.

"I'd keep my mouth shut about this business if I were you," he said kindly. "Of course, this money will have to be returned to your wife, but she doesn't have to know who took it, does she?" He grinned. "Get me?"

Bagby's face lighted up through his tears. Was it possible?

Yes; assuredly, his ears had not deceived him.

The detective was still grinning at him. Slowly the meaning of the big man's words came home to him.

"Y-yes, sir, I—I get you," he stammered.

Mr. Blair was not very demonstrative. Being very unemotional himself, tears were one of the very few things which managed to pierce his usual sangfroid, and "get on his nerves." He had a desire to have the conversation over as soon as possible. He was extremely uneasy in his new rôle of forgiveness, and feared every moment that his guest would begin thanking him. He unceremoniously pushed the little man out of the room with a parting instruction.

"All right, then. Now, you just keep a stiff upper lip, and keep your mouth shut. Tell your wife that you were here to see me, and had to wait some little time until I came in, and that I said it wasn't me who was watching her house last night. You just keep quiet about everything else, and your wife will get her money and nobody will ever be the wiser. I will attend to everything, so don't worry, and I'll give you my word as a gentleman that this little affair will be strictly confidential between the two of us. Just watch your step in the future, and drop in the office to see me some time. Somehow or other, I've taken a great liking to you."

The two men shook hands cordially, one with a sort of dog devotion, and the other with confusion, which he tried to hide behind a cloud of tobacco smoke.

Mrs. Bagby received seven hundred dollars in the mail next morning, accompanied by the following letter:

"DEER LADY:—I am senting yore money back to yew, as my konshuntz herts me. When you gets this I will be on me way to China, ware I cant be arested. THE DODGER."

Mr. Blair's was a sympathetic soul.

"Caught With the Goods" is the title of a very interesting detective story to be issued in the next number of this publication. We call your special attention to it.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

NO.
1 THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, by Dr. H. Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, by Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE TELLER'S SECRET, by Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, by Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, by William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS, By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, by Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, by Robert C. Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, by Charles F. Oursler
13 UNDER A MASK, by Crittenden Marriott
14 CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall
15 AFTER A MILLION, by Police Captain Howard
16 SHADOWING THE BLUE TRIANGLE, by Charles F. Oursler
17 THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FORTESQUE, by R. Ingalls
18 THE BIRD-HEADED SPHINX, by Edith S. Tupper
19 A DOUBLE MYSTERY, by Dr. Harry Enton
20 THE MAGICIAN DETECTIVE, by C. F. Oursler
21 KING COBRA MYSTERY, by George Gilbert

NO.
22 THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS, by Wm. H. Osborne
23 NO MAN'S MAN, by Maxwell Smith
24 THE TREVOR PUZZLE, by T. C. Harbaugh
25 THE TRAIL OF ROSES, by Edmund Condon
26 THE HINDOO VANISHING CLUE, By Pauline Carrington Bouve
27 WHO WAS GUILTY? by Beulah Poynter
28 THE EVIL EYE, by Chas. F. Oursler
29 THE THIRTEENTH DOOR, by Edith Sessions Tupper
30 THE GAME OF DETECTIVE CAREW, by L. Jerome
31 LAW-MAKER AND LAW-BREAKER, by Beulah Poynter
32 THE COUNTERFEIT HEIRESS, by Inspector John Harrigan
33 TRACKED TO CHINA, by Chief Roger O'Brien
34 AFTER THE GERMAN SPIES, by May Halsey Miller
35 THE CLUE IN THE BOX, by Alexander Douglas
36 TRAILED BY A FRENCH DETECTIVE, by Rene Renaud
37 A DROP OF INK, by Lieutenant Robert W. Warden
38 THE TEN DOCTORS, by Allan Arnold Fox
39 THE STAIN ON PAGE 61, by Chas. T. Jordan
40 A MASKED MYSTERY, by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 THE BLACK SOUL, by Beulah Poynter

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SHADOWING A SHARPER

By DETECTIVE SERGEANT BONNER.

A FIRE suddenly burst forth late one winter evening in the stables attached to a large house in Westchester, then in the occupation of David Stretton, a retired merchant of large wealth. I happened to be not far off, and, as in duty bound, hastened to afford what assistance I could. By great exertions and good fortune, the fire was confined to the stables, which were totally consumed; and being pretty skillful in the management of horses, I succeeded in saving two very valuable fillies, which, frenzied by the flames, and plunging wildly, could not be brought out till, with considerable difficulty and danger, I had managed to blind them to the red glare of the conflagration.

There could be no doubt the fire was accidental—a groom had let fall an open lighted lantern upon a heap of loose straw; and being satisfied upon that point, I was about leaving, when I was told that Mr. Stretton wished to speak with me.

Obeying the summons, as a matter of course, I, in two or three minutes, found myself in the presence of Stretton, an aged invalid, very nearly used up by the fret and fever of nearly fifty years of successful trade. Mr. Stretton was by no means of a niggardly disposition, as the present he made me gave twenty golden proofs. The fillies I had mainly helped to save were not only of great value, but his especial pets; and he would not, he said, for any sum, have them injured, much less burned to death. Besides the master of the house, there were in the drawing-room two gentlemen whom I had noticed at the fire, and a Miss Clara Vignolles, Mr. Stretton's niece.

This lady was plain in features, which were somewhat coarsely marked by smallpox, and could not, I guessed, be much less than thirty; but there was an expression of sweetness, of mild good nature, about her clear brown eyes and placid mouth, which was pleasing at first sight, and would, I was quite sure, improve upon acquaintance.

Miss Vignolles was an object of sedulous attention to the elder of the two youngish gentlemen, whom I heard addressed as Monsieur Morny. I supposed he was a Frenchman. Indeed, a gentleman with the heroic baptismal name of Achilles could not have properly been anything else. A tall, well-set-up personage was M. Achilles Morny. His face was a hard, handsome one; his complexion a swarthy saffron; and his dark eyes were full of light—not light from heaven.

Mr. Stretton, the younger man, and old Stretton's nephew, was unmistakably of home growth. His complexion was as fair as that of his cousin, Miss Vignolles; his eyes and hair bright brown, like hers; the ensemble of his countenance presenting a much more striking contrast to that of M. Achilles Morny than even the difference of contour and color. He looked me sharply in the face, upon hearing my name mentioned by his uncle, and as quickly withdrew his gaze; a slight color flushing his fair, pale face as he did so. Had I been professionally engaged in any affair with which Mark Stretton was ever so slightly connected, I should have felt a curious interest in those symptoms of a mind disturbed; as it was, they excited but a momentary curiosity, and vanished from my memory, till revived by subsequent events. M. Achilles Morny did not honor me with the slightest notice, which, as matters turned out, was fortunate.

Five or six months had slipped away, and I was passing along Madison avenue, New York, when my attention was challenged by a violent uproar in the first floor of No. — in that street. Up flew one of the windows, giving egress to volleys of glass and crockery, flung out upon the pavement by a woman, who, while doing so, screamed "Murder! murder!" with might and main.

I hurried to the street door, and knocked peremptorily till it was opened by the landlady, a Mrs. Parkins, whom I knew to be the widow of a naval officer, eking out a scanty pension by letting furnished lodgings. She explained that the furious hubbub going on upstairs was merely a violent quarrel between a foreign gentleman and his wife who occupied the first floor. The lady, who was of a very jealous temperament, suspected her husband of an intrigue with a Miss Vignolles.

"Vignolles! Vignolles!" I interrupted; "the name seems familiar to me."

"The husband, Monsieur Morny——"

"Morny! Vignolles!—I remember now. Excuse me. Pray proceed."

"From what I can make out," resumed Mrs. Parkins, "the husband, in changing his suit, left a note in the vest, which Madame Morny, chancing to pounce upon, found to be from a Miss Vignolles, and at once gave way to a torrent of invective rage, accompanying the same by smashing every breakable thing of value upon the floor, or by hurling it out of the window."

This explanation was given during a partial lull in the marital storm, which again broke forth with augmented fury and renewed cries of "Murder! *On m'etrangle!* Murder! Help!" etc., etc.

Remarking that I was bound to ascertain personally the cause of those frantic outcries, I ascended the stairs two or three at a time; the landlady, meanwhile, securing the door with bolt and chain against the intrusion of the mob, rapidly collecting outside.

I passed into the back first-floor room, which communicated by folding doors with the front apartment. The violence of the altercation going on prevented my entrance from being noticed, and I paused to ask myself whether I had a legal right to interfere. I saw that not only a furious conflict in words was going on, but a bodily struggle for the possession of a note, which, as I came upon the scene, the gentleman was on the point of wresting from the lady's clutch. This was not the kind or degree of violence to justify cries of murder; and I was about to make a movement in retreat when the man turned around by the swing of his successful effort to secure the paper, and brought within my view the reflection of his face in a mirror, which at the same moment revealed my presence to him. I at once recognized the M. Morny I had seen at Stretton's house.

Fiercely confronting me, he asked who I was, and what I wanted there.

"I am a detective, and I am here because I heard cries of murder, which issued from this room."

The lady, a fine creature, in a frenzy of rage, rushed by him toward me.

"A police, are you?" she exclaimed. "My God! that is

what I wish. This man is a wretch—a monster! He is trying to seduce——"

"Silence!" thundered M. Achilles Morny, catching her by the arm, and swinging her away with such force that she fell over an ottoman on the floor. "Silence, fool!" he added with deadly malignity of tone, as he seized and raised her; "or, by all the devils, you'll repent of it!"

Fear quelled the woman's rage, and she burst into tears.

"And now, sir, will you be gone," said M. Achilles Morny, turning fiercely upon me, "or must I kick you from my apartment?"

"If the lady is willing to declare upon oath that she is in fear of personal violence at your hands, I will take you to the nearest police-station."

"You take me to the police-station, you cursed dog!"

"Do you, madam, fear further personal violence from this man?" I asked.

"No—no—no," sobbed the woman; "I was violent, wrong. Go away, go!"

"And quick! in one moment!" shouted her husband; "or, thunder of hell, I shall help you downstairs! Like this, do you see? Ah, the devil!"

He had seized my arm to help me downstairs, and was unpleasantly surprised to find himself tripped up and sprawling on his back. I laughed, and walked away. In the passage below I found Mrs. Parkins awaiting. She said Monsieur and Madame Morny had resided in her house about six weeks only, and that such scenes as I had witnessed, though not always so violent, were of frequent occurrence. What was she to do? I could only advise her to get rid of such undesirable lodgers as quickly as she could, and then left the house, outside of which a small crowd of curious idlers were still assembled.

Extraordinary! very extraordinary! thought I, that such a person as this Morny appears to be should have obtained a footing of intimacy in David Stretton's family. The wife's suspicion, that he is engaged in an intrigue with Miss Vignolles, must be the coinage of her own jealous brain. The supposition was simply absurd. Far likelier that the lady calling herself Madame Morny was not his wife, and that the handsome Frenchman was wooing Miss Vignolles to marry her.

M. Achilles Morny could not forgive the outrage I had inflicted upon his personal dignity; and, chancing to see me about a week afterwards, as he—much the worse for wine—was leaving Churchill's, he seized the opportunity of taking a little pleasant revenge. He recognized me by the glare of the electric lights before I noticed him, and, suddenly shaking off his companion's arm, he hurtled forward, with the intention of tumbling me upon the sloppy pavement (it had been raining all day). He nearly succeeded, too—would have done so, entirely to his own satisfaction, I have little doubt, but that he was half-drunk. As it happened, I just managed to step back clear of his rush, and, unable to check himself, he went headlong across the pavement, slipped, stumbled, fell into a heap of mud, and, quite unable to regain his feet, wallowed helplessly till picked up by his friend.

The spectacle which he presented was so irresistibly ludicrous, that the volleys of abuse he sputtered at me were quite powerless to check the malicious merriment it excited; and it seemed that the man would have gone mad with rage had not Mark Stretton, whom I had not at first recognized, compelled him, with a porter's help, to re-enter the restaurant.

I had not gone far when I was overtaken by Mr. Stretton, junior.

"May I ask, sir," said the young man, abruptly, "where you became acquainted with Monsieur Morny, and how you contrived to make an enemy of that gentleman?"

"My acquaintance with M. Morny is of the slightest," I answered. "It happened that I witnessed a disreputable scene between him and his wife. That is all."

"He has no wife," was the rejoinder. "I wish to God he had! You must mean Adele St. Ange, a fine brunette, some thirty years of age."

"Yes; a fine brunette, as you say, but not, I think, so old as that."

"Mademoiselle St. Ange bears her age well." Having said that, Stretton was silent for a minute or two, looking me in the face the while with anxious inquisition. "You have a reputation, Waters," he resumed, abruptly, "for singular acuteness and daring in your profession."

"I am sometimes fortunate. Quite as often the reverse."

"I have vital need of the services of a sagacious, resolute man. Yet I do not see," he added, checking himself, "how any degree of skill or resolution could help me! At all events, it's ill talking in this wretched weather. Some other time, perhaps; good-night."

Another faint gleam of light was thus thrown over what I could well believe was a very gloomy business. Achilles Morny must, in some way, have got young Stretton in his toils—most likely by cheating him at the gaming-table—and was now making use of that evil influence to obtain the hand of Clara Vignolles. Else what meant, "He has no wife—I wish to God he had"? It might be, too, that Mark Stretton himself loved his cousin! No, that was not likely. She was four or five years his senior, and young men seldom get crazed by charms which thirty winters, to say nothing of smallpox, have marred. The affair would no doubt run its course without my assistance. To its natural termination—a mercenary marriage, desertion by the foreign husband, followed by years of unavailing regret on the part of the wife. A trite story, old as rascaldom, common as woman's faith and folly.

I erred in supposing that my aid would not be required in a matter which seemed quite out of my line. It was near upon the close of that year's autumn when my attention was caught by the following paragraph in a morning paper, copied from the Nyack *Journal:*

"DEPLORABLE ACCIDENT.—We deeply regret to announce that David Stretton, who had been for some time past residing at Nyack, for the benefit of his health, fell, on Tuesday evening, at near dusk, from the lofty cliffs which beetle over the Hudson. He was watching the play of the fading light upon the shore opposite, from the very edge of the precipice. Some portion of the ground gave way suddenly beneath his feet, and, unable to spring back, the unfortunate gentleman toppled over with a loud cry, and fell headlong down the face of the Palisades. This, it will be seen, is the account given of the fatal accident by Monsieur Morny, a French gentleman, the only person within sight or hearing of the deceased when the catastrophe occurred. The lamented gentleman's large property is said to be bequeathed to his nephew, Mark Stretton, and his niece, Miss Clara Vignolles, in equal portions. The verdict was, of course, 'Accidental death.'"

I need not dwell upon the vague doubts, suspicions, which, knowing what I did of M. Morny, arose in my mind as I ran over the above paragraph; and I turned eagerly to the report of the proceedings at the inquest, which, considerably condensed, was given in another column. Only one witness besides M. Achilles Morny had been examined—a Mr. Leonard Bayton—who deposed that when it was quite dark he heard not one cry only, but several, of horror and despair, from about the spot where the accident must have occurred. He hurried in the direction of those cries, but could see no one, and after searching about for some time he resumed his way homeward. This evidence had passed without remark; in fact, the only pertinent ques-

tion put to the witness Morny was this by one of the jurymen: "How, if it was dark at the time of the accident, could the deceased have been watching the play of light upon the opposite shore?" Before M. Morny could answer, the coroner, referring to his notes, said the witness Morny had stated it was dusk, not dark, when the catastrophe occurred. This explanation must have been held to be satisfactory, as a verdict of accidental death was at once and unanimously agreed to.

Late in the following week a hurriedly scrawled note, directed to me, was delivered at headquarters. It was signed "Mark Stretton," and expressed an urgent request that I would write at once to Bellevue House, Westchester, stating where he, Stretton, could see me privately.

I lost no time in sending a reply, appointing the Fox Tavern as the place, and two p. m. as the hour of meeting. Arrived there, he was to ask for Charles Smith, and would be shown into a private room.

I had been at the rendezvous about ten minutes when a taxi drove up, and Mark Stretton presently entered the room.

I started with uncontrollable surprise. Stretton was the specter of his former self. The paper upon which I am writing was not whiter than his face, his eyes glared with unnatural fire, and his whole frame shook as with ague. I had ordered whisky, and as he dropped into a chair, I pushed the untasted glass toward him. He emptied it without a word, and at a gulp. The strong spirit partially restrung his nerves, and he said, huskily:

"Waters, I am in a fearful strait! Will you stand by me?"

"Be calm, Mr. Stretton," I replied; "and when I am informed of the nature of the fearful strait you speak of, I will frankly state whether I can stand by you to any useful purpose."

"You refuse to commit yourself! I feared so, and—I don't care, you shall know all! It can, at worst, but hasten the inevitable. Have you seen in the papers," he added, with quivering eyes and tongue, "an account of the death of—of——"

He broke off abruptly, bursting into a passion of tears.

"You were about asking me, Mr. Stretton, if I had read in the newspapers an account of your uncle's death? I have done so, and have formed a strong opinion upon the case."

"And that opinion is, must be, that the verdict lied; that my uncle was foully murdered!"

"That is going too far. Permit me, however, to ask if Mr. Achilles Morny is a suitor for the hand of Miss Vignolles, and if that suit was opposed to the wishes and will of your deceased uncle?"

"Yes—yes—yes!" cried Stretton, springing to his feet, and striking the table with his clenched fist at each iteration. "Clara, infatuated simpleton! engaged herself to Morny several months since. That engagement became known to my uncle just four days before the 'accident' at Nyack, and he emphatically declared in Morny's presence that he should, at once, so alter his will that Clara, if she fulfilled her pledge, should not have a cent."

"How, then, happened it that Morny was walking amicably with your uncle upon the evening in question?"

"That was a lie of Morny's! They were not, could not have been, walking together. I have no doubt that Morny, seizing a favorable moment, stole behind, or treacherously accosted my uncle, and after a struggle, brief but desperate, of which the cries were heard by Bayton, hurled his victim over the cliff, unseen by any eye save God's."

"There can be no proof, then, to justify the terrible conclusion at which you have arrived! And let me ask, Mr. Stretton, how it happened that you did not present yourself before the inquest, and contradict Morny's sworn assertion, that your uncle was an attached and constant friend, with whom he was amicably conversing a few moments before the deceased fell over the cliff."

"I dared not," replied Stretton, with a shudder, and relapsing into nervous weakness; "I should not now," he added, "dare confide the truth to you, but that I am resolved, come what may—shame, infamy, an ignominious death to myself—that Clara Vignolles shall never wed the murderer of her good, kind uncle."

"I do not understand! You are threatened with shame, infamy, an ignominious death, if you but hint a suspicion that your uncle met with foul play! Who is it that can menace you with such tremendous penalties? Morny?"

"No other. Waters, my life, innocent in purpose if not in deed, is in his power! A word of his would consign me to the gallows! You are amazed, repulsed, indignant! But, at all events, you will listen in a candid spirit to what I have to say before condemning, abandoning me?"

"Certainly I will; and, if you please, let the solution you have volunteered of this confounding business be as explicit as possible."

"I will be thoroughly explicit. You are aware that my late uncle was never married, and that I and Miss Vignolles have been, for many years, the acknowledged heirs of his wealth. One wish dear to his heart, was that I should marry my cousin Clara, in order that the property might not be divided. Neither of us was desirous of carrying out our uncle's wish, or whim, in that particular; and as to myself, I, with the perversity common to spoiled youth, must needs fall in love with a young lady who had nothing but a pure mind and a charming person to offer in exchange for money-riches."

"To which exchange your uncle peremptorily objected, and the course of true love ran awry as usual. I understand."

"You are, to some extent, mistaken. My uncle did not insist upon carrying out his own will in that particular; but having a high respect for the lady, he stipulated that the constancy of my attachment should be tested by time and absence—say a twelvemonth—to be passed by me in New York—in which city important matters of business remained unsettled, which my presence there might help to wind up. I went with a light heart," continued Mr. Stretton. "The commercial affairs I had to settle occupied me some five or six months, during which period I had an abundance of idle time on my hands, whilst awaiting instructions as to how I should deal with certain cases and propositions. That fatal leisure led me to the hells of the Empire City, where I met, and soon became intimate with, M. Achilles Morny, a Belgian born, of French extraction, who had come to North America in search of reputedly wealthy relatives, whose progenitors had emigrated to Lower, or French Canada, in the time of Louis XV. If he succeeded in clearly tracing his ancestry among the simple inhabitants—of that I know nothing—he altogether failed in levying money-contributions upon them, which, of course, was his sole object in seeking them out. Disgusted by his ill-success, M. Morny came to New York, with the hope of better luck at the gaming tables of this wealthy city. He was again disappointed, being, in fact, but a sorry gamester, and utterly unfitted to cope, if only from the excitability of his temperament, with the cool, clever Yankees. I, myself, won considerable sums of him; and, at last, he was fairly done-up, reduced to his last dollar, and he asked me for the loan of means to enable him and Adele Saint Ange—whom I then supposed to be his wife—to return to Brussels. The request was readily granted, and he was set up upon his 'black legs' again; he being, as I had often heard hinted, and now fully be-

lieve, an arrant cheat, though generally an unsuccessful one."

"There are more cheats of that class than outsiders would readily believe," I remarked, while Mr. Stretton moistened his fevered lips.

"Morny," continued Mr. Stretton, "had gained sufficient experience to refuse risking the loan he had obtained of me in New York. The simpler folk of Montreal and Quebec would, he hoped, be less difficult to fleece. He proposed, therefore, to return to Europe via Canada, and suggested that I might accompany him upon so exciting a pleasure-trip as far as Quebec, as I should have nothing to do till letters reached me from the people I represented, which could hardly be under two months. I at once agreed to do so. A feeling of reticence," Mr. Stretton went on to say, "disinclined me to travel in my own name with Monsieur and Madame Morny; but the excuse I made to them was, that my uncle might be angry if he should hear that I had been amusing myself in Canada, when I ought to have been patiently awaiting instructions in New York. The name I assumed was that of Matthew Skinner—the initials being the same as those marked on my linen. The Mornys suggested no objection, and we set off together in high spirits. Our first halting-place was Montreal. I did not join with Morny in his forage among the small deer of that city; not, certainly, deterred therefrom by any scruple of conscience, but because the ennui which had driven me to gaming in New York was banished by the novel and picturesque aspect of the city and its motley population, and I required no coarser stimulant. I tire you, perhaps, with these details?"

"Not at all, sir. Pray tell your story in your own way."

"Arrived at Quebec, on the Saint Lawrence, at which place the Mornys were to embark for Antwerp, and where we remained three weeks, the old feeling of lassitude came back upon me with as much force as ever, and after 'doing the heights of Abraham,' the scene of Wolfe's victory, half a dozen times over, I wanted to seek such excitement as the Quebec gambling hells might afford. Accursed infatuation! miserable imbecility!" he added, with a burst of passion, "to which I owe it that I have since been the slave of a man I hate and loathe—the bond-slave of my uncle's murderer!"

I remained silent, and Mr. Stretton, soon sufficiently mastering his emotion, resumed:

"The joint which Morny and I chiefly frequented was an apartment on the first floor of Le Coq, a tavern in the lower town, so close upon the edge of a pier that a quaint balcony built out, as it were, from the room in which play was carried on, projected over the Saint Lawrence. This balcony was a favorite smoking-place in fine weather for the gamblers during intervals of active play. The frequenters of Le Coq were chiefly second or third-rate merchants, shipowners, sea-captains, and the stakes, as a rule, moderate. Among other Quebec notabilities, of a minor degree, was one Aime Bontemps, the son of a shipowner. He was a slight young man, of excitable temperament, sudden and quick in quarrel, whom losses, if at all considerable, lashed into ungovernable fury. Few, in consequence, liked to play with him, and the less so as he was known to be as ready with pistol as with tongue. One Sunday evening I dropped in at Le Coq, where I found Bontemps, Morny, and a stranger, whose name I afterwards knew to be Leroux. Morny and Leroux seemed to be in a very dismal mood; they had, I found, been playing at hazard with Bontemps, and had lost considerable. That which quenched them had, of course, lent him fire, and he bouncingly challenged Monsieur l'Americain to recover his friend Morny's losses. I, too, was in rollicking spirits, having in the course of the afternoon imbibed a considerable quantity of wine, and unhesitatingly accepted the challenge. The game was to be simple hazard; that is to say, as you well know, an even bet upon the color, red or black, of a card turned up alternately by each player. It was my first turn to call, and placing a twenty-dollar note upon the card, I cried 'Rouge!'"

"One can soon lose a fortune, Mr. Stretton, at such play as that."

"True, and Bontemps, though a rash gamester when the fit was on, hesitated to accept it. He did so, however, reassured, probably, by my flustered. not to say intoxicated condition. 'Rouge!' I won. The play flew on with fiery speed, its rapid alternations of gain and loss, together with the stimulants we swallowed, exciting us almost to delirium. Night came, and, declining candles, the table was removed to the balcony, and we played on by the quite sufficient light of the brilliant Canadian moon and stars. Morny and Leroux watched us with eager interest, especially when, after about two hours' play, fortune declared decisively on my side. I had not only won back all that Leroux and Morny had lost, the whole of the money Bontemps had brought with him to Le Coq, but he was indebted to me over $1,000. Still fast and furious the cries of 'Noir!—rouge!—rouge!—noir!' succeeded each other, Bontemps' curses mingling with my triumphant laughter, till he was in my debt quite $1,500. 'Malediction!' he exclaimed, starting up and glaring at me with bloodshot, fiery eyes, 'you must be in league with the devil!' I laughed derisively and shuffled the cards afresh. This was too much for the hot-blooded young man. 'Cheat! rascal! villain!' he shouted, and struck me with his open hand upon the cheek, 'you have robbed me!' It required but such an outrage to completely madden me. I sprang upon him with a scream of rage—struck, seized, pinioned him, and, with an exertion of maniacal strength, hurled him over the balcony into the deep, swift river beneath. I saw the body cut the water and disappear beneath the glittering surface; then the sudden revulsion—the flashing consciousness that I was a homicide—quelled in a moment both strength and rage; my brain reeled, and I fell upon the floor in a faint. The next seven or eight hours are a blank to me, except so far as memory recalls the chaotic images of a fevered, drunken dream, from which I awoke to find myself whirling along in a limousine in company with Madame Morny. The first words she uttered instantly recalled the shame and horror of the preceding night, and I listened with a beating heart to what she had further to communicate. I had killed Bontemps; there was no doubt about that; his body had been picked up by some boatmen after it had been about two hours in the water. Meanwhile Morny, aided by Leroux and Jean Pipon, landlord of Le Coq, had borne me away to a place of concealment till a carriage could be secretly hired to convey me over the Canadian frontier. I was now on my way thither, and had left Quebec close upon four hours. Having been only known in Canada as Mr. Skinner, Mme. Morny thought there was but little danger of my apprehension, if I kept as much as possible indoors till her husband joined us. This was the substance of her communication, with this addition—that the money upon the table which I had won had been employed by Morny to purchase the connivance of Pipon and Leroux at my escape. We reached New York in safety, and about ten days afterwards Morny joined us there, bringing with him a printed bill, offering a large reward for the apprehension of Matthew Skinner, supposed to be a native of Baltimore, in the United States, and a long statement, cut out of a Quebec newspaper, giving the examination of Achilles Morny, Jean Pipon, and Antoine Leroux, before the Quebec magistrate, touching the death of Aime Bon-

temps. The hand-bill I have mislaid, if I ever had it in my own possession; the extract from the newspaper I have brought with me. Read for yourself."

I did so, with a growing disquietude—the evidence given by the three men differing widely from Mr. Stretton's own version of the affair; and unquestionably, if true, fixing him with the crime of willful murder.

"My account of the dreadful occurrence is strictly correct," said Mr. Stretton, perceiving the bad effect the reported evidence produced upon my mind. "Morny, it is true, persists that his testimony was softened in my favor, but he is a prince of liars and traitors."

"My experience has generally enabled me to distinguish the tone and language of candor and truth from those of fair-seeming guilt and falsehood, and I am able to say that I believe you—or, at least, that my belief strongly inclines that way. Were it not so, my duty would be a plain and very painful one, to expose you."

"I knew I incurred that danger. Do you think," he added, in a low, shaking voice—"do you think that, supposing I voluntarily surrendered myself to the Quebec authorities, and the witnesses persisted in their evidence as set forth in the Quebec newspapers, that I should be convicted of the capital offense?"

"There can be no doubt that you would. Still, *magna est veritas*—and I perceive, or fancy I do, a slight gleam of light, indicating that the dark cloud may have a silver lining."

"For God's sake, do not mock me with false hopes! What, except conviction for the minor offense of manslaughter, can I hope for? And why do you so intently scrutinize the piece of newspaper?"

"A suspicion—surmise, rather—glanced across my mind, which, for the present, I must keep to myself. What may be the title and the exact date of the newspaper from which the report has been cut?"

"The Quebec *Gazette*. The date of the—the—of poor Bontemps' death was August 14th, last year. Why do you ask these questions?"

"For my own satisfaction. How was it that Morny did not bring you the whole newspaper?"

"I do not remember to have heard; but say, again, why these questions?"

"Be calm, young man, be calm. It is probable that I am mistaken in the surmise or hope which has dawned upon my mind. Miss Vignolles, I presume, does not even now share your opinion of M. Achilles Morny?"

"Very, very far from it. His address and speciousness have fascinated, enthralled her; and I dread every day to hear that he has induced her to privately wed him under some lying pretext or other. Privately, of course, to avoid the scandal of marrying while her uncle was scarcely cold in his shroud."

"M. Morny has, I suppose, fleeced you handsomely since your return to America?"

"Enormously. In truth, he has treated me like a slave."

"Exactly. You have not made a confidant of the young lady you spoke of?"

"I have not even seen her since my return. Homicide as I knew myself to be, I dared not, Mr. Waters. It would have been another and worse crime to have continued an intimacy which would have damned the future of an amiable girl, by linking it with that of one whose life is forfeit to the law, and which dread penalty may at any hour be enforced. I have rather permitted her to think me capricious—false; another heavy addition to the burden of shame and grief which bows me to the dust. But I will cast it off," he continued vehemently, "if life goes with it, sooner than Clara shall be the scoundrel's victim! The horrible secret stifles, kills me—I'll be poisoned with it no longer! At the worst, it will be but the sacrifice of a year or two, more or less, of shameful, hateful life!"

"Those are sounding sentences, Mr. Stretton, very easily uttered. Much more easy to say than to act out the resolution they express. Will you be here again at seven this evening?"

He would dine at the Fox and await my return.

It was so settled, and I went my way.

It would have been imprudent on my part to have prematurely excited the hopes of Stretton, with reference to the printed statement alleged to have been cut from a Quebec newspaper. The more, however, I reflected upon the subject, the stronger my suspicions grew. In the first place, I had noticed that the lines of the newspaper column were precisely parallel on both sides of the slip of paper; now, it is rare, indeed, that half a column can be cut out of a newspaper without running into and shearing off some portion of the matter on the other side. This, in addition to the curious circumstance that Morny had not brought the complete newspaper to Stretton at New York, suggested the possibility that so wily a gentleman might have concocted the pretended report, got it printed on a slip resembling a portion of a newspaper column, indifferent matter being furnished for the other side, which would, in such a case, be struck off with perfect evenness. Any one who had a sufficient interest to serve might easily do this, and I was now off to confirm or dissipate my suspicions, by examining files of newspapers. The handbill Morny could also easily have managed. It was at all events worth while to make inquiry.

The file of Quebec papers I found to be imperfect, especially so about the time of Bontemps' death; and I was informed that the missing numbers had been stolen by some undetected visitor. Achilles Morny, for a thousand, was my instant conviction, and I will tell the reader why. Neither of the English Quebec papers on the file was printed with the same type as the slip which I held in my hand containing the report. Moreover, the files of the French journals published at Quebec, and those of Montreal, had been plundered of the same numbers, or nearly so; and the New York Journals made no mention whatever of the catastrophe at Le Coq. This last fact was not, however, of so much importance. Moreover, in an affair involving such tremendous issues, it, upon further reflection, occurred to me, that as I was bound to make assurance doubly sure, it would be well, if I could not find the missing papers in New York, to send direct to Quebec for them. The worst was, I could not receive a reply in some time. There was, however, no pressing urgency for obtaining the papers, except that in the meantime Achilles Morny might espouse the niece of the venerable gentleman whom, Mr. Stretton believed, the said Morny had murdered. Was it certain, too, that the completest demonstration of Morny's turpitude, in falsely accusing her cousin of such a crime, would induce Miss Vignolles to break off the match? By no means certain. The gloss an artful scoundrel might put upon his motives in the matter—for example, a wish to drive his friend and her relative from the society of gamblers and blacklegs, by compelling him to acutely feel the possible consequences of such base companionship—would perhaps impose upon the weakness and credulity of a plain woman on the shady side of thirty, in love with a serious, handsome man. Too probable, I feared. Besides, I had another arrow in my quiver, which, if critically used, would—might, I should say—prove a fatal one.

"I have nothing, at present, to say, Mr. Stretton, in answer to your look of anxious inquiry," said I, pressing the proffered hand of the terribly agitated young gentleman, "except that the faint gleam of cheering light I spoke

of, has widened—brightened, since I left you. It will be useless to press me for more than that at present. However, take heart and courage; to do so, whatever may happen, will do you no harm. Above and before all, Mr. Stretton, keep a strict, constant watch upon your cousin, Miss Vignolles, and inform me—if you decide to place yourself in my hands—without an hour's delay, and without committing yourself, remember, with M. Morny, if there is any likelihood of this abominable marriage taking place."

Mr. Stretton promised to do so, adding that he placed implicit confidence in me; and with a lighter heart than beat in his bosom when he arrived at the Fox, he left the tavern.

I could not, with all my diligence, find the missing papers in New York, and wrote, therefore, to Quebec for them.

I called, not long after my interview with Mr. Stretton, on Mrs. Parkins, in Madison avenue. Her quarrelsome lodgers had not left; though, since she had ascertained (how she did so, I never knew) they were not man and wife, she had given them peremptory notice to quit without delay. The truth was the Mornys paid well; and Mrs. Parkins dearly loved—herself remaining severely immaculate; lovably so, if need be—to dabble with marriage and other correlative mysteries. This, I apprehend, was the solution of their long stay.

I had a long conversation with Mrs. Parkins, which afforded me many interesting items concerning the Mornys; an especially interesting one being that not very long before they engaged her apartments they had been traveling in Scotland, as man and wife. Before leaving, I had, to a great extent, made a confidant of Mrs. Parkins, who had undertaken, upon certain distinctly understood conditions, to carry out my instructions. The next day I forwarded her an old *Times* newspaper, which contained a *résumé* of a celebrated case, the decision in which confirmed the law or custom of Scotland, according to which any single man who acknowledges a single woman to be his wife, becomes, *ipso facto*, that woman's husband.

Five or six weeks passed away before I again saw Mr. Stretton. He sought for me at police headquarters. I chanced to be there, and we were soon engaged in anxious consultation. Miss Vignolles, he informed me, had definitely promised to marry Achilles Morny on that very day week, and would listen to no remonstrances on her cousin's part against that disgraceful, fatal step. "The villain himself," he added, "defies, mocks me, and—and you were right, Waters; I have not the nerve to deliberately face the electric chair when it looms distinctly in view, bravely as you have heard me mouth of doing so."

"A very human weakness, the avowal of which shows courage. By the bye, were not M. Morny and Adele St. Ange traveling together in Scotland at the beginning of the summer?"

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"For my own satisfaction, I again tell you, sir. Where is the marriage to take place?"

"At Bellevue House."

"Is M. Achilles Morny in the habit of addressing Miss Vignolles by letter?"

"Yes, frequently."

"Could you manage to procure me—of course, without the lady's knowledge—a sight of some of these missives?"

"I could; will by to-morrow, if you desire it."

"Some one or other of them may be of service. I have nothing more to say at present, Mr. Stretton, except that you may rely upon me to the full extent of my resources."

The next day I received a packet of letters, the love-missives of M. Morny addressed to Miss Vignolles. What a specious, artful rascal they showed him to be! But though exceedingly warm, impassioned—that is to say warmth, passion, were to a certain extent successfully simulated—I was disappointed at not finding some disparaging allusion to Adele St. Ange. I had hoped that Miss Vignolles might have expressed some jealous contempt of that lady, the reply to which would have blown the ardent passion of St. Ange to consuming flame. As it was, I did not see that I could make effective use of them. Still, as I was going to see Mrs. Parkins, it might be as well to take the two fiercest of them with me.

Mrs. Parkins was punctual to the appointment, and informed me that our clever scheme, promising as it looked, had completely broken down. She had apprised Mademoiselle St. Ange that M. Morny was certainly about to marry Miss Vignolles; an announcement which, as we had calculated, threw the lady into a frenzy of rage. Better still, when the mental tempest had in some degree subsided, and St. Ange could listen to reason, she was elated beyond measure to read for herself in the *Times*, that if, when she was traveling in Scotland with M. Morny, he had only once introduced her as his wife to witnesses that could depose to that fact, she was his lawful wife to all intents and purposes.

"*Mon Dieu*," she exclaimed, "he did so, once, twice, twenty times, and notably in Glasgow, at——"

M. Morny's loud rat-tat at the street door checked her speech, and Mrs. Parkins made a hasty retreat.

A loud, fierce altercation ensued between the "happy pair," which gradually grew milder till their voices could no longer be heard below. After having dined, M. Morny left the house, as was his wont, but looking more lifted up, Mrs. Parkins thought, than usual.

He was hardly gone when the first-floor bell rang. Mrs. Parkins answered it, and found the lady seated at dessert, her eyes flashing with exultation.

"My good Mrs. Parkins," said she, "I wish to say to you that Morny, whom, with all his faults toward me, I still regard with tenderness, has convinced me that we never passed as man and wife in Scotland; he, the cunning rogue, having been at the time quite aware of the droll law which prevails there. I cannot, therefore, be his wife. It was a great misfortune for me; and if is time, I have reflected, that our unfortunate liaison, which upon its discovery so justly scandalized you, should cease."

"He has your consent then, Madame, to marry Miss Vignolles?"

"Yes! What, after all, could I do? Achilles will be very rich; and he has promised me a moderate sum to re-establish myself as a modiste in Brussels. It is the best part for both of us."

"I remarked," continued Mrs. Parkins, "that it was probable the lady's fortune would be strictly settled upon herself."

"No, no, no!" rejoined St. Ange, with a burst of scornful triumph; "not one penny will be settled upon herself! She adores Achilles—he is her god; and she will joyfully surrender to him, not only her person, but her immense riches. Poor fool!" and again she laughed viciously.

"You think then, Madame, that the marriage will be an unhappy one?"

"My word of honor, no!" replied St. Ange, checking her vivacity, and speaking with pretended seriousness. "My word of honor, no; only it does seem silly for a wife to reserve nothing for herself out of so large a fortune. Nevertheless, Achilles will be a kind husband; which is lucky for her, as she will be quite at his disposition. Her rich cousin, too, Mark Stretton, is Morny's slave."

"Mr. Stretton!"

"Yes, my good woman, Morny's slave; but that is a subject upon which I must not say another word. Enough that it is true—perfectly true. But we shall not be too cruel with either of them. That is to say," again attempting to repress her rampant insolence of triumph, "that is to say, Morny will be kind toward his wife, and have consideration for Mr. Stretton. Enough now, Mrs. Parkins. I wished to make you to quite understand that the Scotch story I told you was pure imagination, that is all. We leave your lodgings early on Wednesday next. Good-evening."

"I left the room," added Mrs. Parkins, "in a manner stunned, feeling that some dreadful mischief was on foot; but of what nature exactly I could not comprehend.

"It is so plain, nevertheless, that he who runs may read its meaning. Adele St. Ange convinced Morny, much against his will, I dare say, by the case reported in the *Times*, that according to the custom of Scotland (though I myself have strong doubts whether that custom applies in the case of two aliens) she was his lawful wife. He believing that, a compromise took place. St. Ange is to permit the solemnization of Morny's marriage with Miss Vignolles, in order that he may get her fortune, which chiefly, I understand, consists of personals, into his hands. That prime purpose effected, the duped woman will be abandoned. Morny, with his legal wife, St. Ange, as he and she believe her to be, will be off to the Continent, to avoid the penalty attached to bigamy, still keeping his fearful hold upon Mr. Stretton. That is about the essence of the programme agreed to, depend upon it."

"Gracious heaven! And will you be able to defeat the infamous plot?"

"I do not think I shall. Time, I fear, will beat me. I shall, however, do what I can, and you, in the meantime, keep me instantly informed of any movement on the part of your precious lodgers."

A disastrous, most afflicting turn of affairs this! However, as I had, as usual with me, been gradually worked up by the swayings of conflicting action into taking an entirely personal interest in the affair, almost as much so as if Mr. Stretton and Miss Vignolles had been my brother and sister—I resolved, and to a certain extent succeeded, is losing neither heart nor hope.

Finding, after much cogitation, and viewing the matter in every possible light, that I was about at the end of my tether, I bethought me of consulting a shrewd old lawyer of my acquaintance, the chiefs of the force refusing, as a rule, to give advice in cases involving tangled questions of law, and in which police interference is not indisputably recognized.

One of the results of that long and very depressing consultation was that I found myself wandering about the docks the following morning in search of ships which hailed from Quebec. They would be numerous, and if my conjecture was well founded as to the newspaper forgery, some one amongst their crews would surely be able to tell me whether or not Aime Bontemps, the son of a man of position in that city, had been the year previously murdered by drowning.

The search was a tedious one, and for a long time only so far successful that no one from Quebec that I met with had ever heard of a gentleman being flung out of the balcony window at Le Coq, and drowned. At last I was directed to the Old Slip Tavern, on Front street, where I would be sure to find Jean Philippe, the skipper of the brig *Marie*, a Quebec man, who knew everybody there.

I found Philippe, but, unfortunately, he was half drunk with liquor, and in that mulishly cunning mood of mind common to many persons of his class when in such a condition, which renders it impossible to elicit a plain answer to a plain question. Such men always fancy that you are pumping them for some concealed, selfish purpose, and wonderful is the fence with which they dodge and evade your queries; and to aggravate the annoyance, this fellow believed himself to be a humorist.

"Do you know a M. Bontemps and his son, Aime Bontemps, at Quebec?"

"Suppose I do, and suppose I don't—what then?"

"Can you tell me if the son, Aime Bontemps, is dead or alive?"

"Well, one or the other he is sure to be."

"Was Aime Bontemps drowned during the autumn of last year?"

"I should say so, being as he was a wild sort of young fellow, he was hanged the spring before."

This last repartee elicited a roar of applause from the company, one of whom whispered to me that I had better see Jean Philippe early the next morning, when he would be sober, and readily afford me any information I required.

I acquiesed in that suggestion, and was leaving the Old Slip Tavern, when Jean Philippe roared:

"I say, Mister Detective, you see I've fathomed you, old fellow. What odds will you bet that Aime Bontemps was drowned when the Yankee pitched him out of Le Coq into the river? Or what will you bet that young Bontemps only had a good ducking? Eh? Come now."

"I shall bet nothing either way, but will see you early to-morrow."

I had not said a word about "Yankee" or "Le Coq" in Jean Philippe's hearing, and the shadow of a doubt no longer rested on my mind as to the trick played upon Stretton by Achilles Morny.

Still, positive evidence thereof was indispensable. I went in quest of Philippe early the next morning, and found that the *Marie* had sailed with a fair wind on the previous afternoon, about two hours after I left him.

This was exasperating, and that exasperation was increased twenty-fold when, upon my return home, I found a note from Mr. Stretton, to the effect that it was all over with him and his sacrificed cousin, Clara. Morny, in consequence of a hint he had received that an attempt would be made to prove him a married man according to the law of Scotland, had cast off all reserve, insisted that his marriage with Miss Vignolles should take place the very next day, and threatened, in the event of the slightest delay or demur, to forthwith denounce him as a murderer. Mademoiselle St. Ange had, moreover, been brought to Bellevue House, and had solemnly assured Miss Vignolles that no such pretended Scotch marriage had ever taken place.

"Clara fully believes her," he wrote, "and urged by her liking for Morny and her fears for me, yielded to the scoundrel's overbearing insistence; further declaring that if I should be mad enough to voluntarily surrender myself to justice, her marriage should not in consequence be delayed for one hour. Thus, you see, if I could summon up resolution—which, God help me, I cannot—to brave a shameful death, the fearful sacrifice would be made in vain! Hopelessly beset as I am, I have a kind of superstitious reliance upon you. The accursed ceremony will commence at eleven o'clock. Will you see me before then?—M. S."

Mrs. Parkins, thought I, must have been babbling about that Scotch dodge; but there is no time for reproaches or regrets. I must see the lawyer again.

I arrived at the Bellevue House at a little after ten the next morning. My ring at the garden gate was answered by Mr. Stretton himself, who had watched for me from a

window. He looked an image of despair, agonized by self-reproach.

"Clara," he gasped, rather than said, "persists in her determination to marry Morny. Still, wonderful as is the ascendency he has acquired over her, she would, I am positive, after what has passed during the last twenty-four hours, but for her fears for me, insist, at least, upon delaying the ceremonial. Here they come!"

I looked from the window of the apartment to which Mr. Stretton had stealthily conducted me, and saw an open touring-car approaching, in which were seated Achilles Morny and Mademoiselle St. Ange!

"What!" I exclaimed, "he has the effrontery to bring that woman with him!"

"Yes, he asked Clara's permission to do so; so that if there should be an attempt to forbid the marriage, under the pretense that the bridegroom had been married in Scotland, Mademoiselle St. Ange will be upon the spot to rebut the calumny."

"I see. M. Morny is armed at all points, then?"

"Yes; and yet it seems to me, Waters, that your eyes sparkle as with hope."

"You are right: a courageous, but far, very far from a confident hope. Such," I added, affecting a stilted style of speech which would put a stopper upon prosaic questioning, "such, for example, as Ivanhoe, though conscious of the justice of his cause and determined to do his duty, must have felt when he rode into the lists of Templestowe to encounter his redoubtable antagonist, Brian de Bois Guilbert. *Esperance*, nevertheless. I am not easily beaten when I am morally sure that right is on my side. As, however, the possibility of success, in this instance, requires that my onslaught should be sudden, unexpected, you must place me where I shall be out of sight, but within hearing, till the parson's first words give the *laissez aller*, which will launch me full tilt against M. Achilles Morny."

Mark Stretton stared and fancied I must have been drinking; he, however, said nothing, which was just what I wanted, and softy led the way to the drawing-room, where the marriage ceremony was to take place. I could perceive no place of concealment therein, and we were still debating the matter when footsteps quickly approaching necessitated decision, and I vanish behind a high upright piano. The footsteps proved to be those of a servant bringing a message from Miss Vignolles to her cousin. She wished to speak with him forthwith, and he, of course, at once obeyed the summons.

At last the tedious watch-hands marked the hour of eleven, and a few minutes after the bridal party entered the room, and seated themselves. The bride, upon the brink of a precipice, sobbed woefully; a manifestation of feeling which the soft, but stern, low tones of M. Achilles Morny rebuked, and registered.

A few painful minutes passed, and then entered the Reverend Mr. ——— and his clerk. The company stood up, and the clergyman commanded the doors to be thrown open; that was done, and the ceremony began.

"Dearly beloved——"

"It is needless," said I, stepping to the front, "it is needless to read farther. I am a detective, and the bridegroom, Achilles Morny, is wanted."

Amazement, consternation, could never have been more vividly depicted than by the faces and attitudes of all assembled there.

The clergyman was the first to speak.

"What," he asked, "is the meaning of this? If you——"

"Oh!" interrupted Morny, who had by then recognized me, "it is that *scelerat*, Waters. He that will have it I was married in Scotland! Adele," he added, stepping towards the woman, who, for decency's sage, stood some distance apart, "Adele, you——"

Affecting to misunderstand his movement, I seized him by the collar.

"Sir, I will handcuff you!" I exclaimed, and I took a pair of handcuffs from my pocket. The fellow was dumfounded, and I went on. "I arrest you, Achilles Morny, for felony—for robbing Mark Stretton of several thousand dollars by threats of accusing him of a capital crime."

"My God!"

The fellow's eye quailed beneath mine; the hue of his face was that of a corpse; I felt doubly sure that I was right.

"That accusation, Achilles Morny, you supported by a forged newspaper. Ah! you force me to it, then!"—and, after a short struggle, I clasped the iron cuffs upon his wrists. "You knew that Aime Bontemps was and is alive and well! But we waste words. Come along," and I pushed him towards the door with much greater violence than I should have used had it not been my cue to stun, confound him. I succeeded.

"Save me!" he screamed, bursting away and casting himself at the feet of Miss Vignolles, who seemed stricken. "Mercy, Clara! I swear to you by all that is holy, sacred, by my own love, my devotion to you, that I intended—our union once consecrated—to admit, to proclaim, that Aime Bontemps was not drowned, and is alive and well! Yes, I swear that——"

"That will do, Morny," I interrupted; "and in recompense of your volunteered confession, I will relieve you of the handcuffs."

"Thunder of hell! Then you did not know that—that——"

"Right! I did not know, till you confessed it, that the newspaper paragraph was a forgery; and but for your candid avowal, we should have been scarcely able to detain you more than an hour or two. You have saved us much trouble; now come along."

The volley of cursing which my words elicited was really something awful, and feeling how extremely painful the scene must be to Miss Vignolles, I dragged Morny away by sheer force.

When he was taken before a magistrate the next morning some slight evidence was given, and a remand requested, which, as a matter of course, was granted. Mr. Stretton's lawyer, who had shaped the charge as one of obtaining money under false pretenses, did not object to the prisoner being admitted to bail. Bail was accordingly granted, and responsible tradesmen, who had never before heard of Morny, came forward to bail him in very heavy recognizances.

This was much the wisest course. Mark Stretton had almost deserved the suffering and loss he had undergone; and for Miss Vignolles' sake it was desirable that Morny should flee the country, which he very speedily did. As to the alleged crime at Nyack, not the faintest proof thereof could have been obtained. Perhaps, too, after all, Mark Stretton's suspicion was unfounded. If not, we may be sure that the crime, though unseen by human eyes, was witnessed by Him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay."

We have a large number of magnificent stories on hand, written by some of the best authors in the world, which we intend to publish in each of the coming numbers of this magazine. Another by William Hamilton Osborne will soon be issued.

GIVING WAY TO TEMPTATION

By ARTHUR BOOTH

Here is a story told to me by Convict No. 34986 on a day I called at Sing Sing prison looking for material for a yarn for MYSTERY MAGAZINE.

"ABOUT fifteen years ago I found it desirable to make a little change in business, my partner having left suddenly, and I not caring to carry on the business alone, it struck me as a good plan to apply for the position of clerk in the office of Gould, Lovejoy & Co., a well-known legal firm in New York.

"The position was a desirable one, and I might not have been able to secure it without assistance, but, as it happened, I was on such terms with Mr. Paul Marvell, one of Gould & Lovejoy's best clients, that he was very willing to give me a letter of recommendation to them, which settled the business at once.

"Gould & Lovejoy received me into their office as clerk at a liberal salary. The work was what I had been used to, and the place a tolerably easy one.

"I had nothing to complain of, and was able to satisfy my employers, so that after a few months they began to treat me with considerable confidence, and even cordiality.

"I had been in their employ about ten months, I believe, when one day, as I was helping Mr. Lovejoy to compare the copy I had just made of a deed of trust with the original, a lady was shown into the office, whom Mr. Lovejoy rose to shake hands with, and addressed as Mrs. Marvell.

"As she took the chair the porter placed for her, the lady threw back her veil and revealed a very pretty face, still young, but pale and troubled.

"Without appearing to look up, I was admiring both the lady and the richness of her dress, when, not noticing me, she took a large morocco case from the bag upon her arm, and said, in an agitated voice:

"'Mr. Lovejoy, I have come to place my diamonds in your keeping; I do not dare—actually do not dare—to have them in the house any longer, for Mr. Marvell has threatened——'

"'One moment, madam, if you please,' interrupted Mr. Lovejoy, turning toward me to say:

"'Pleggitt, you had better go on with that writ. We will finish the deed presently.'

"Of course I had to leave the room, but my desk in the outer office was close to the partition, and I had long before scaled up the wall-paper and picked away the plastering, letting the paper fall again over the hole, so that, bending over my desk, my ear was within a few inches of Mr. Lovejoy's usual seat, and I could hear all that passed between him and any one sitting in the client's chair at the right hand of his desk.

"So, with as little delay as possible after leaving the inner room, I seated myself at my own desk, and while slowly filling out the writ, listened to every word spoken between my chief and his pretty client, who was just saying:

"'Yes, he actually threatened that if I did not give them to him he would take them by force, and I have not the least doubt he would do it. Why, Mr. Lovejoy, that man has robbed me, piece by piece, of nearly all the splendid property my father left. Sometimes by flattery, sometimes by threats, he has made me sign away real estate, stocks, notes of hand—in fact, almost everything I could call my own, and, at last, he has begun to demand my jewels. These diamonds were a wedding present from a rich bachelor uncle, and are worth, I am told, more than a hundred thousand dollars.

"'I have for some time considered them my last resource, should I be robbed of everything else, and I have almost determined to legally separate from Mr. Marvell and make the jewels available for my support.

"'Last night, however, I wore them at a reception, and when we were coming home Paul said it was all nonsense to keep so much property lying idle, and that he was going to dispose of the diamonds and invest the money in a more sensible way.

"'I knew well enough what that meant. He would invest it at the gambling-table, where so much of my father's property has already gone, and I told him he never should have them for any such purpose.

"'He was very angry, and we exchanged some high words, but he did not attempt, as I feared he would, to take the jewels from me by force; and when we reached home, I ran up-stairs, and locked myself in my own room, leaving him to go growling to a den he has off the billiard-room in the attic.

"'This morning I have not seen or heard from him, but as soon as I had breakfasted I took the diamonds and brought them to you. I want you to keep them in your safe until I demand them; not by writing, either, but by word of mouth; and I want you to keep having them a profound secret. If that man knew where they were, he would get them in spite of all I could do to prevent it. There are no bounds to his daring, or his cunning, or his avarice. Mr. Lovejoy, I am the most miserable woman alive in this great city.'

"Then she began to cry, as a woman always will at last, if she is ever so furious to begin with, and old Lovejoy tried, in his dry way, to comfort her, and make what excuses he could for her husband, whom the old fellow knew to have good pickings on his bones yet. But the chief part to me of what he said was a solemn promise to keep the diamonds safely; and, in fact, I heard him get up and go to lock the jewel-box in his safe.

"Then he wrote out a receipt, and offered it to Mrs. Marvell, who, however, refused to take it, saying that her husband would be sure to find it, no matter where she hid it, and that as sure as he did he would have the property it represented.

"Mr. Lovejoy insisted, but the lady was as obstinate as all women when they get set in any particularly foolish course, and the matter ended in Mrs. Marvell going away without the diamonds and without the receipt.

"When she pushed back her chair in taking leave, I quietly took my hat and went out for a little walk, not wishing to arouse Lovejoy's suspicions by even showing

myself within listening distance, and when I returned he had gone home to dinner.

"That night I could not sleep as well as usual, and when I did drop off, I was haunted by visions of a great red morocco jewel-case. The figures '100,000 dollars' seemed written in letters of fire upon the darkness all around me.

"Next day, however, I took care not to appear at all different from common; and though old Lovejoy tried me with two or three allusions to Mrs. Marvell and her visit, I showed so little interest in either that the old gentleman finally concluded I knew nothing about the matter, and so it dropped.

"The temptation to get those jewels took possession of me, for I was greatly in need of money. I studied the subject for a week before I made up my mind in what way I should make the hundred thousand available.

"The trouble was that I found it hard to settle upon one out of half a dozen plans, all good; but finally I decided upon one by which I seemed likely to get paid for my trouble twice over; first, by a price from Marvell for telling him where the diamonds were, and next from the diamonds themselves, which I had no doubt of getting.

"The next night, after making up my mind, I waited for Marvell at the door of a place where I knew he went to gamble every night, and just as he was going in I touched him on the arm.

"'What do you want, fellow?' said he first; and then, seeing who it was, changed his tune a little.

"'Ho, Pleggitt, is it you? Well, what can I do for you to-night?'

"'It isn't so much what you can do for me, as I for you, Mr. Marvell,' said I; and then, as he looked sharp at me, I whispered: 'Do you want to know what friend your wife has loaned her diamonds to?'

"'Confound her, I suspected it,' growled he, as fierce as a bull-dog ready for a spring. 'Where are they, Pleggitt?'

"'With a lady-friend of hers in the country,' said I, to throw him off the scent; 'but I've got to have something for my trouble before I say anything more.'

"At first he refused to talk, then, finally he consented to give me my price.

"'So then I gave him the whole story, just as I've given it here.

"He seemed rather down on his luck to find that, instead of a lady-friend, it was old Lovejoy who had got the sparklers in his fire-proof safe; but I told him that I'd as soon have them there as in my own pocket, and that I'd manage that part of the business easy.

"It was getting out of it afterward that troubled me, for, while they could scarcely touch a man for helping himself to his wife's property, my case was not so clear, and if one were caught, matters would look rather squally for me.

"'Not a bit more than for me,' said Marvell. 'For every cent and cent's worth she's got is so tied up and settled upon herself, that I've no more right to it than you. It's only by working on her feelings and her terror that I've got so much as I have; but now even that placer's worked out, and my lady won't speak a word to me. My mother's staying at our house, so I have to keep pretty still, as the old lady's thirds are something handsome; but when she's gone home, I promise you I'll raise the roof if there's anything more to be got by it.'

"'Why don't you wait for the diamonds till then? Perhaps you can make your wife give them to you,' said I.

"'No, I won't wait,' answered Marvell. 'I more than guess she's planning to separate from me, and I may wake any morning and find she's left, bag and baggage. I'll secure the diamonds this very night, if you help me as you promised. Come along in here, and we'll put the matter in shape.'

"I followed him into the gambling-house, and we soon found a quiet corner for a chat, and went at it.

"Before midnight it was all settled, and as I went home, leaving Marvell deep in a game of poker, I fixed out my own little plan of independent operation.

"This would have been simple enough if all I had wanted was to touch the diamonds; but a good name is more than riches, and I had a character to preserve.

"The afternoon of the next day, as Mr. Lovejoy was about to leave the office, I remarked:

"'You would like that deposition ready to carry into court in the morning, wouldn't you, sir?'

"'Yes, certainly. Isn't it ready?' asked my employer.

"'No, sir. It wasn't given to me until noon, and then I was sent to the probate office about that bill, you know.'

"'Yes, yes; I ought not to have taken you off. But the deposition must be ready at some rate.'

"'I can take it home, sir.'

"'No; the paper must not leave the office. Do what you can to-night, and be here in the morning in time to finish it. Few hours' sharp work will do it, won't it?'

"'Yes, sir; it shall be ready,' said I, in the resigned sort of way of some one who makes up his mind to sacrifice himself; and old Lovejoy, who didn't care a pin whether I killed myself or not, so that he got the papers, left the place with one of the patronizing words he kept for humble men like me.

"The other clerk soon followed him, and I told the office-boy he needn't wait, as I had some writing to do.

"The first thing I did when alone was to get out the deposition—which, by the way, was finished to all but one page—and to spread it upon my desk, with blotter and pen-wiper ready, and a pen in the ink-stand.

"Then I went into Mr. Lovejoy's room and quietly unfastened and opened a window looking upon a narrow alley at the back of the office. This window remained guarded by an iron shutter fastened inside by a padlock, passed through a heavy staple; but as this staple had already been considerably loosened, a few minutes' work now drew it from its setting, where, however, I replaced it.

"Then lowering the window, I quietly cut out a pane of glass just above the fastening, and leaving the window open, but the shutter closed, turned to the important operation of the evening. This was no less than to open the safe and abstract the diamonds before the arrival of my associate, to whom I was willing to leave all the honors of the evening, while I burdened myself only with its profits.

"I did not wish to abscond or be suspected, and I was very willing that Mr. Marvell should take both the inconvenience and the odium off my shoulders. As to how I opened the safe, I will simply say it was done with keys, but as to how those keys were procured, I should not wish to state.

"These keys had never as yet been tried, however, and it was only with a good deal of trouble that they were made effective. But just as I was going to give up in despair the lock yielded, the door of the inner safe swung open, and there lay Mrs. Marvell's red morocco jewel-case, with a hundred thousands dollars worth of diamonds inside it.

"I seized it and examined the fastenings. It was locked twice, and each lock covered with a seal bearing the

stamp of 'G., L. & Co.' Again and again I blessed my lucky stars.

"Had it been Mrs. Marvell's own seal I could not have replaced it without fatal delay and danger, but as it was, both signet and wax lay ready upon Mr. Lovejoy's table, and to use them would be but the work of a moment.

"With no further delay, therefore, I broke off the wax, taking care to throw the fragments into the stove, and soon fitted a key to the locks from a bunch provided for the purpose.

"I opened the box and feasted my eyes for a moment upon the pretty sight within. Necklace, head-gear, earrings, bracelet, and pin, besides a few stray ornaments not belonging to the set, but all of diamonds, and all of the purest water.

"I did not dare, however, to stop long looking, but sweeping them all into my pocket, made haste to lock and seal the empty box and put it back into the safe. Then I managed to make my clumsy keys turn the locks again, and finally, just half an hour before I was to meet Paul Marvell, I had all right for his reception.

"Letting myself softly out of the office, I rushed home, where I found my wife.

"I had told her beforehand pretty much what she had to do, but now I told her all over again, so that there should be no mistake.

"'Mind,' said I, 'when you hear the sound like a pistol is the time to run for the officer. And you were just going up the stairs to look for me when you heard it. Don't forget now.'

"'No,' said she, with a nod that meant business; 'I shan't forget, nor I shan't blunder.'

"'All right, then,' answered I, and when she had left the room, I stood a minute looking about. A big rose-bush stood in a pot on the window. I took it to the hearth, emptied out plant, dirt, and all, stowed away the diamonds in the bottom of the pot, and then set back the rose-bush, and packed the dirt around it. Then I swept up the hearth, put the rose-bush where I had found it, and left the room just as my wife was coming into it.

"She looked at me rather sharp, and I at her, but neither of us said anything, and I went out and straight to the place where I was to meet Marvell.

"He was waiting, and, without any words followed me to the alley behind the office, and into the window of a warehouse just opposite to it. This was no difficult matter, as the building was old and disused, and the fastenings, both of windows and doors, no more than apologies.

"Once inside, I lighted an electric flash-light and got our tools into working order. Then we went upstairs and found ourselves in a room upon a level with Gould & Lovejoy's offices, and at a window not six feet distant from that of which I had loosened the shutter and taken out the pane of glass.

"A platform, formerly used for hoisting, lay upon the floor, and quietly opening the window, or rather door, we shoved it out, and piled some heavy bars of iron upon the inner end to keep it steady.

"'You first,' says Marvell, drawing back when all was ready. 'I'll stand on the end in here to make sure, and after you're in you can rest the edge of the board upon the edge of the window over there.'

"'All right,' said I, and over I went, thinking to myself:

"You do well to be careful of yourself, my good friend, but if you knew what a pretty little trap I've set for you, perhaps you'd be a little more so.'

"Prying the shutter open with a short bar carried for the purpose, I stepped into the window, drew the board over after me, and gave Mr. Marvell a hand to help him in crossing.

"As he passed me in the window, I quietly pulled his handkerchief from the pocket where it was dangling, and wrapped around the piece of glass I had cut from the window. Then I let it fall into the alley, a thick bed of mud preventing the noise of breakage.

"The handkerchief was marked with Marvell's initials. It would be sure to be found next morning, and the piece of glass inside would be a very ugly hint as to how it came there.

"We were fairly in the office, and Mr. Marvell already with his hand on the knob of the safe-door.

"'Why, it isn't unlocked,' said he angrily.

"'No,' answered I, looking rather crestfallen; 'I couldn't get at the works of the lock any way to take an impression. It can't be picked or doctored in any way. It's got to be blown out.'

"'Eh! blown out with powder? That'll make a confounded noise, won't it?'

"'No, not so much, and there's nobody to hear it. These offices are quite deserted at night.'

"'They are?' asked Marvell, and I caught, as he spoke, a stealthy, ugly look at me, which told me the way the man's thoughts were running.

"'Yes,' said I, taking a pistol out of my breast pocket, 'we're safe enough here from everything but ourselves. Here's some powder and a wad. You've only to fill the lock with powder, plug it in, and light the end of this slow match.'

"'Why don't you do it yourself?' asked Marvell sulkily.

"'I'll keep watch while you do it,' said I, handling my pistol, and going to the window, for the truth was, I was getting afraid of him, he looked so ugly.

"He didn't say anything to this; but taking up the little paper of powder, began filling it into the key-hole. When he had done this, he slipped the paper into his pocket, as I had hoped he would. Then he finished laying the charge, touched a match to the bit of tow hanging out of the key-hole, and the next moment, with a muffled explosion, the door flew open, and Marvell's head was thrust into the safe.

"'Quick now,' cried he; 'where's the box?'

"'In this inner safe. That lock has got to be forced, too.'

"'No, here's a key hanging to it. Isn't that the one?'

"To be sure it was, and Mr. Lovejoy, in his careless fashion, had left it there at night, instead of taking it home, as he should. I did not care especially, for Marvell had already broken open one door of the safe, and could do no worse by breaking another.

"While these thoughts passed through my mind he was opening the inner door, and the next moment seized the red morocco box and began to break the seals. As he did so I caught up a package of bank-notes, of which I knew Mr. Lovejoy had taken the numbers, and slipped them into his pocket.

"At this moment a thundering knock shook the outer door, and a voice cried:

"'Open, in the name of the law!'

"'What's that? The explosion of the lock has given the alarm. Run before they get in!'

"As I spoke, I purposely stood in the brute's path to the window, and, as I had expected, he thrust me out of it with such violence as sent me reeling to the floor.

"In falling, I fired my pistol. The next moment the door of the outer office was burst open, heavy steps crossed the floor, the door of communication was thrown wide, and two men rushed into the room, followed by my wife,

who was sobbing and crying with great effect. The moment she saw me the admirable creature shrieked:

"'Oh, my husband!—my murdered husband!' and flew at me with open arms and redoubled sobs.

"'Where is he—where's the burglar?' cried one of the officers, while the other, springing to the open window, leaned far out of it to look for a ladder or rope, or spout by which the thief could have escaped.

"But Marvell, in all his haste, had taken time to pull his bridge in and close the opposite window after him, with the double plan, as I imagined, of cutting off pursuit and of leaving me in the trap to answer for our mutual little operation.

"'He jumped out of that window,' gasped I, closing my eyes and rolling my head off my wife's shoulder to the floor.

"'He's fainting! My poor, dear Peleg! The villains have murdered him!' sobbed the little woman.

"'Stay here with your husband till we come back; mind now, don't stir an inch, or we'll have you in the jug before you know it,' ordered one of the policemen as he followed his mate out of the room.

"In a moment we heard their voices in the lane and then in the street; but, though my wife and I indulged in a few whispers, neither of us stirred until the officers came again, but more slowly, up the stairs and into the room.

"'Has he got away?' asked I faintly, as the first one came toward me.

"'Never you mind just now,' said he, so surly that I knew he had lost the track; 'what I want to know is how you came here yourself at this time o' night?'

"'I came to finish my work ready for morning,' said I, sitting up, but leaning against my wife, and putting my hand on my forehead.

"'Well, what happened? How did the fellow get in?' asked the officer sharp and quick, and turning the light of the flash full on my face.

"'I came here about two hours ago,' says I, clear and honest as I could speak, 'to finish copying some papers for Mr. Lovejoy to take into court in the morning. They're on my desk now if you don't believe me. I was so busy trying to get through and go home that I never noticed any noise—if noise there was—nor so much as looked up from my desk till I heard a sound in the next room, like firing off a pistol inside a bale of cotton-wool.

"'They're breaking into the safe,' says I to myself, and taking the pistol out of my desk, I went softly and opened the door on a crack, thinking to shoot the fellow without giving him a chance at me, and the law would carry me out in it. But just as I saw it really was a burglar, and that he was stuffing a package of bank-bills into his breast pocket, he caught sight of me, or else heard the door, for he just glanced around, and then sprung like a deer for the window. I threw open the door, ran after him a few steps, and fired. Whether I hit him or not I couldn't say; the burglar, rushing back, gave me a blow enough to kill an ox, knocked me flat, and jumped through the window just as you burst open the door.'

"'I suppose you'd know him again?' asked the officer.

"'His face was covered with black cloth. I didn't see it nor yet hear him speak,' answered I.

"'And how came you here, ma'am?" went on the officer, turning to my wife.

"'Why, when my husband didn't come home at ten o'clock I got anxious, as any wife had ought to whose man was killing himself with drudging night and day for them as never knows when he's done enough——'

"'Hush, my dear,' said I; 'I do it free and willing, and the firm is very good to me.'

"'Well, when he didn't come home, and I felt worried, I just put on my shawl and slipped up to see what had come to him, and when I had my foot on the lower stair, just going up, I heard a noise like a pistol, only not like a pistol, either, and so I stopped to listen, with my heart flown up in my mouth, and the next I heard was men running, and then a noise of a real pistol going off, and so then I ran out again and called for the police. One of you was at the corner of the street when I came along.'

"'Yes, that was me,' said one of the cops; then they said we must both come to headquarters and tell the inspector about it.

"So they got a taxi for me, and we went to the inspector, and there we told our stories all over again.

"Phœbe and I told our story always the same way. Marvell got off clear, but his handkerchief was found under the window, and Mrs. Marvell said to every one that she had no doubt he was the thief.

"The marked notes were advertised, and in a few days three of them were brought in. They had been paid for a first-class passage to Liverpool by a man calling himself William Smith.

"The steamer was the fastest of the line, and had left her moorings just six hours after the robbery. Likely enough, William Smith had not found time or chance to open his wife's jewel-box until after he had settled his own case by running away.

"Gould, Lovejoy & Co., after hearing all the evidence in the case, not only acquitted me of all blame, but gave me a pretty little testimonial, in the shape of a fifty-dollar note, out of gratitude for my effort in defense of their property. This was the more to their credit, as they had lost some thousands of dollars in the bundle of bank-notes, and were somewhat afraid of having to pay Mrs. Marvell for her diamonds.

"But as there was no receipt to show that they ever had them, and as the lady, with the absurdity of her sex, declared they should not again give her a cent, they finally allowed themselves to be persuaded to accept her polite offer, and let her bear the entire loss herself. I remained in the office, and we all seemed to have got into smooth water again, when a woman's folly spoiled the whole operation which I had carried through with such pains and such skill.

"I had never told Phœbe where the diamonds were hidden, nor did I disturb them for a few days, not knowing how matters would turn, or if the house might not be searched some fine day when I was absent, and I felt sure that no one would ever think of looking under a rose-bush in full bloom for a set of diamonds.

"In fact, it was two weeks since the robbery, when, as I sat at my desk copying a deed, and wondering if I could venture now to offer some of my diamonds to a man who would take them, but might prove an awkward witness against me, some one quietly entered the office, walked up behind me, and remarked: 'You are my prisoner.'

"I asked what for as calmly as I could, and was told on suspicion of being concerned in the robbery of Gould & Lovejoy's office, and the theft of Mrs. Marvell's diamonds.

"Old Lovejoy, hearing the row, came out and tried to say he didn't believe the story, but the officer whispered something in his ear, and the old fellow started and scowled, and walked away without looking toward me again.

"At the police court I found Phœbe, making a try to

keep up the game, but all ready to cave if a little harder pressed.

"The story soon came out.

"It seems while I thought I was cheating Phœbe, the artful jade was in reality cheating me. She had found out by the looks of her rose-bush that it had been disturbed, and the very day after I hid the diamonds there she had them out and examined them.

"If she had stopped there it might have done, but woman's vanity would never let her rest without trying the trinkets on herself, and finally, when she put them back, she kept out a ring set with one ruby in a circle of diamonds for her own share, feeling pretty sure that I had not examined the jewels enough to miss it.

"Having the ring, she would, of course, wear it, and the upshot of the whole was, that going into a shop, more to look at the goods than with any idea of buying, she took off her glove to feel some cloth, and did not notice that a lady next to her suddenly dropped what she was looking at and went to speak to the owner of the place.

"They came back together, and the lady, who was no other than Mrs. Marvell, accused Phœbe of being in possession of one of the jewels belonging to her and stolen from Gould & Lovejoy's office. The shopkeeper called a policeman, and half an hour after another was sent to arrest me.

"Phœbe was coaxed and frightened into letting out so much that the detective had no trouble in picking up the rest, and the end of it was she went to the House of Correction and I to spend a matter of fifteen years in Sing Sing.

"During my imprisonment I learned how true indeed is the old proverb that 'Honesty is the best policy,' and no matter how cleverly you work to do wrong, sooner or later Justice will overtake you. Therefore I say to all, give not away to temptation."

Read the opening chapters of the new serial which begins in this number. It is very exciting and intensely interesting.

HOW DIAMONDS ARE GROUND

WHEN diamonds are first received, the stones look like ordinary chunks of glass, and it generally takes two weeks before the stone is made to look like a real diamond. Much care has to be taken in getting a stone ready for the market, for usually a diamond shrinks 60 per cent in weight, and this must be carefully watched.

When the cutter receives the raw stone he polishes a small spot on the diamond wheel to enable him to look into the stone and see its possibilities. The stone then goes to the splitter, who, by means of a brass clamp and hammer breaks it up into the desired number of pieces. Next it is partially imbedded in lead; it is clamped before a toothless buzz-saw of phosphor bronze from four to six-thousandths of an inch thick and revolving 3,800 times a minute. It would require 25 hours of continuous sawing to cut through a third of an inch.

After the sawing process the pieces go to the shaper. Here one piece of diamond, embedded in lead and screwed fast to the center of a revolving plate, is brought in contact with another diamond fastened to the end of a giant penholder. As the lathe plate revolves, the two diamonds grind one against the other, and gradually, by frequently changing position, the two become little spheres, which look like beads of ground glass.

Next comes the actual grinding. It is done upon a receiving wheel of specially tempered steel. Upon the upper surface is spread a mixture of diamond dust and pure olive oil. The wheel is set in motion, and then the little spheres of diamonds, once more imbedded in lead, are held in clamps against it. By continually changing the position of the stone, all of the 52 parts of the diamond are polished, and it is then ready for display. If a stone is too deep or too shallow its fire will not be of the best.

PRIMITIVE FERRYBOATS

IN a country where rivers are subject to sudden and heavy floods, bridges are in many cases so insecure that ferries must always be maintained in addition. Such is the case in India, and the methods of crossing streams to-day are what they have been from the earliest times. An American consular officer tells how he was taken across an Indian river at the time of a freshet. The contrivance was simple, and has been used in the Orient as long as history shows any record.

A cord having been fastened to a large, elongated gourd, and a smaller gourd being also tied to it, the native gets astride, and laying his breast upon the larger gourd paddles himself across with his hands and feet.

Women, too, avail themselves of this singular contrivance, under the escort of a ferryman, who, similarly mounted, takes his charge in tow, carries her basket, with perhaps a child in it, on his head, and conveys them safely across.

Herds of cattle swim these flooded rivers like water rats, and the herd boy, as a matter of course, takes the tail of the hindermost bullock in his hand, and thus gains a very comfortable lift across.

These methods of crossing rivers, however, are hardly in accordance with our ideas of comfort. So the American thought one day as he stood, after a long ride, on the bank of a wide and rapid stream which separated him from his halting place. He did not relish the idea of buffeting the muddy current on a horse of gourds, but as there was no boat within twenty miles it seemed as if he must either do this or bivouac on the bank without his dinner.

While he was in this dilemma a native signified that he would soon set the foreigner right. From a neighboring hut he brought a native bedstead—not a four-poster such as Westerners use, but a small, light frame of wood having four little legs and held together by the interlacing of a piece of cord, which thus forms a sort of netted bottom to this simple piece of furniture. The native next brought out four round earthen pots, and after protecting the bottom of each with a few inches of sand he put the legs of the cot into the pots and signified that the vessel was ready to be launched.

As the American sat doubled up on the extemporized raft in company with his saddle, he found himself raised an inch or so above the level of the water, the earthen pots forming admirable floats. A couple of lusty swimmers then took him in tow and soon landed him on the opposite bank.

THE STORY OF A DIAMOND RING

By CAPTAIN M'CARTHY

SOME three years ago I was sitting alone in my office, when a fine-looking, well-dressed stranger, about twenty-eight or thirty years of age, entered, and asked to see Mr. Carbon, the detective.

"I am the person named, and at your service, sir," I replied. "Please be seated."

"I do not wish to be interrupted in what I propose to tell you," he said, glancing around, "nor do I wish to have any listener except yourself."

I arose and locked the door. He hesitated a little, colored, and then said:

"From my air of mystery, I suppose you think I have something to relate of great importance; but though it is important to me, and will be to you if you trace out the real facts, yet I assure you, to begin with, it is nothing more serious than the loss of a diamond ring. The ring, however, I prized far beyond its nominal value, as an heirloom of the family, which has come down to me through several generations, it being presented to one of my ancestors by the then Duke of Cambridge. This ring came into my possession, as the lineal male heir, on my twenty-first birthday; and though I have since worn it at times, I have always watched it with the most zealous care, and never left it out of my sight, except when locked in my safe, where I keep my most important papers and a few valuables.

"Now comes the mystery.

"My safe has a combination-lock, and that combination not a living mortal knows except myself—not even my wife. I will take my oath that the last time I had the ring, showing it to a friend, I returned it to the safe. That was a week ago to-day, and when yesterday I unlocked the safe to get a private paper, I missed the ring from the little iron box where I always kept it. I began a search for it.

"First locking my room-door, that I might not be disturbed, I took out everything in the safe and examined every spot inside with the greatest care, but without finding the precious jewel. The ring was the only thing missing. The loss of it grieves me, and the mystery perplexes me; and so, not knowing better what to do, I have come to see if you can suggest anything to help me.

"Understand that I intend to pay you well for your advice; and if you ever succeed in recovering the ring, your reward shall be one thousand dollars."

"Was the ring indeed so valuable as that?" I asked.

"Intrinsically, no," he answered; "and yet to me invaluable for the reasons I have named. The actual cash value of the diamond would not exceed two hundred dollars, and yet I would give five thousand—nay, ten thousand—rather than lose it. Besides, there runs a legend in the family that whoever parts with it will suffer some great misfortune."

"You had it a week ago, you say, you showed it to a friend, you locked it up in your safe, and you have not seen it since?"

"That is my statement."

"Who was the friend to whom you showed the ring?"

"Godfrey Percy, who has been spending a couple of weeks at my house as my guest."

"Is he with you still?"

"He is. I will be frank with you. My sister and I met him in London a couple of years ago, and he is now engaged to her, and will remain my guest till after the wedding, which is fixed for a week from to-day."

"Was he with you when you locked the ring in the safe?"

"Why that question, Mr. Carbon?"

"Well, for anything you like. If you are to question my questions, I fear we shall not get on very fast. If he was with you, of course he saw you lock it up, and you have proof that you did what you think you did."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Carbon. I thought your questions might imply some suspicion on your part of my friend, and I would just as soon have you suspect my own wife. Yes; he was present, and saw me place the ring in the iron box, lock that, and afterward lock the safe, and he is as anxious as I am to have me solve the mystery by the recovery of the precious jewel!"

"So far, so good. Now then, you have servants, of course?"

"Yes; several."

"You do not suspect any of them?"

"How can I, when no one knows the combination of my safe-lock besides myself."

"It is a mysterious affair," said I, "and I can get no clue from anything you tell me. To make a start in the matter it might be necessary for me to be an inmate of your house for a few days, and even that might amount to nothing."

"I would like to try anything that would promise even the shadow of a hope," he anxiously rejoined, with an air of depression.

"Then suppose I become your guest for a few days?" I suggested.

"If you will."

"But not as an officer, not in my real character," I proceeded. "You must introduce me as a friend of yours just come to town, say William Perkins, and not even your wife must know to the contrary."

"Very well; I will arrange it, and to-morrow at three o'clock I will meet and escort you home to dinner. But is it not possible that some one will recognize you?"

"I will take care of that," I answered.

We arranged the place of meeting at a certain hotel, and I was there a little before the time, disguised in a manner satisfactory to myself. Mr. Howell, the gentleman in question, appeared according to appointment, but I saw at a glance that he did not recognize me. He took a seat facing the door, and I let him remain some minutes over the time. Then I took a seat near him and made some casual remark about the weather. He seemed uneasy, and not inclined for conversation, and I casually remarked that I was waiting for Mr. Carbon, a well-known detective, who had promised to meet me there at that hour. He turned and scrutinized me closely, and then observed:

"I know the gentleman by sight, and it is a little strange if you have an appointment with him that he fails to keep it."

"You are also expecting him, I believe?" I remarked.

"Why do you think that?" he asked in surprise.

"Because I am James Carbon, alias William Perkins."

He started up, exclaiming:

"Clever—very clever indeed. I should never have guessed it. Come, let us go."

For three days I was a guest in the mansion of Mr. Howell, and during that time I closely studied every inmate, got all the minutest details from my host concerning everything I wished to know, and then took my departure in an open and formal manner, without leaving a suspicion behind that I was other than I seemed.

I then sent my agents to work among the pawnbrokers, and the day before that fixed upon for the wedding of Godfrey Percy and Miss Virginia Howell, I called upon the brother of the latter, and handed him the missing ring.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed, fairly clutching it in his excited eagerness, "it is indeed the prize! Where did you find it?"

"At a pawnbroker's."

"Then it was really stolen?"

"Yes."

"And have you any surmise concerning the thief?"

"Yes; I could put my hand on the thief."

"Who is he?"

"I did not say it was a man."

"Man or woman, who is the party?"

"Perhaps for your own peace of mind, you had better never know," I hesitated.

He turned deadly pale and trembled.

"I understand you," he gasped; "but even though the purloiner be my second self, I must have the truth from you. It was my own wife, then?"

"No, it was not your wife."

"Ah, thank heaven for that, at least!" he cried, with a great sigh of relief. "My sister?"

"No, it was not your sister."

"Who then? Now, speak without fear."

"Can I not prevail on you to let the secret remain with myself? For, as yet, no other human being possesses it."

"No, Mr. Carbon. I must and will have it."

"What say you to your friend, then?"

"What friend?" he exclaimed, in amazement.

"Godfrey Percy," I announced.

He fairly staggered, as if he had received a blow.

"Impossible!" he gasped.

"It is true."

He sank down upon a seat, and for some time held his head with his hands.

"Are you sure you have not made a mistake?" he asked at length, in a hollow voice.

"I am certain of what I assert."

"You can prove it?"

"I can."

"Then you shall prove it! Ah, poor, poor Virginia! It will break her heart. It will be the death of her, I fear. Willingly would I give half my fortune to have this otherwise!"

"It is not too late, Mr. Howell," said I, sympathetically. "She need never know."

He bounded from his seat, his eyes blazed, and he turned upon me with a haughty rage that I have never seen equaled.

"For what do you take me, sir?" he cried, his now ashy lips fairly quivering. "If this man is guilty, were he even a prince, my own hand should blow his brains out sooner than he should make my beloved sister his wife! Step into my private room, Mr. Carbon. I will send for him. You must face him before me, and make your accusation good, or take the consequences."

"Mr. Howell," I said, "I see you are a high-tempered, determined man; and I want you to understand that I am another. I will face your gentleman, and make my charge in my own way. He may deny it, and convince you that his word is better than mine. But mark this—if he does deny it, and you accept his denial, I swear to have him arrested for felony, and all the facts publicly exposed from first to last."

"I accept the conditions," he answered; and he at once conducted me to his private apartment, in which stood the safe that his friend had opened.

A servant was dispatched for Percy, and in a few minutes he made his appearance, looking quite unconcerned. I arranged to have everything my own way, and as I now appeared without my disguise, the gentleman did not know me. He glanced at the two of us inquiringly, but I did not keep him in suspence. Stepping up to him, I placed my hand rather roughly on his shoulder, and said with sharp severity:

"Godfrey Percy, I arrest you for stealing your friend's diamond ring and pawning it at Jacob Stein's. You will at once accompany me to a police-court and confront the witnesses."

He turned as white as death, threw up his hand, and then fell down on his knees and begged for mercy of Howell.

"For heaven's sake, spare me!" he gasped. "It was the first and only time I ever did such a thing. I was wanting a certain sum of money, and was too proud to ask you, my dear friend, for it. Oh, George, for God's sake, intercede with this officer, and save me from public disgrace and utter ruin!"

"You did take my diamond ring, then?" said Howell, in a quiet, even tone of voice, that quite surprised me by its natural calmness.

"Yes, I confess it."

"How did you open my safe?"

"I watched you one day when you were working the combination, and was able to make it out. That then became my temptation."

"But the ring was also locked in the iron box."

"You had a duplicate key to that, which was in another drawer that was not locked. Oh, my dear friend George!"

"Call me Mr. Howell, and leave off the friend," calmly interrupted the other. "Godfrey Percy, you were to have been married to my sister to-morrow. Only think of the disgrace she has escaped! In another twenty-four hours she would have been the wife of a thief. I am really grateful to the Providence that has saved her from that disgrace and myself from murder, for I should have killed you. You must go away now, without saying a parting word to any soul in this dwelling. I give you twenty-four hours to start. If, after that time, any police officer finds you, I swear I will never rest till the gate of a prison has bolted you in as a felon! One word more from you, and I will do it now. That is all!"

He pointed his finger imperiously toward the door, and the condemned culprit, in silence, arose from his knees and slunk out of sight. That was the last I ever saw or heard of him.

George Howell then coolly opened the escritoire, drew me a check for one thousand dollars, requested me to settle fairly with the pawnbroker, and never mention a true name in connection with these facts. I never have. All the names I have given here are fictitious. But the brother and sister are now dead.

THE QUIET GAME OVER THE DRUGSTORE

By JOSEPH DANA MILLER

WEST of Fifth avenue, and somewhere between Twenty-third and Thirty-fourth streets—a sufficiently definite radius when you are assured that this story is a true one—is a drugstore. Over that store once, and not so very long ago, a game was in progress, and how that game came to an end is a story the details of which are a painful recollection to at least three of the principals.

The game started in a most modest way. It began with medicinal beans as both counters and stakes, and from "penny ante" developed into an unlimited game, in which each player bought one hundred dollars worth of chips. From the little apartment back of the prescription counter, the game was finally adjourned to a larger room upstairs.

These were the principals, though others, close friends of the players, occasionally dropped in and took a hand: Dr. H., a physician with a large and lucrative practice; Brown, a wealthy contractor, and Thompson, the proprietor of the drugstore. The sums lost did not materially affect any of the players, and as luck varied, though with possibly a slight advantage on the doctor's side, it was not a very costly form of amusement to the three devotees of the great national game.

One afternoon, when the game had been several months in progress, a stranger strolled into the drugstore. He was a quiet, gentlemanly person, dressed with scrupulous propriety, and in excellent taste, and he looked like a professional man. Thompson was behind the counter, and greeted his customer with his usual affability.

The latter hesitated, and looked scrutinizingly into the case where the usual stock of soaps, perfumery, and fancy stationery were displayed.

"Can I buy some poker chips here?" he asked.

"Why, no," said Thompson, hesitatingly, "I have never had any call for them, and have never kept them in stock."

"Pshaw!" said the other, evidently disappointed. "Do you know where I can buy any? I have inquired in half a dozen places in the neighborhood without success. I can get them downtown in the morning, I suppose, but I wanted to use them to-night."

"Well, I may be able to accommodate you with the loan of some," said Thompson, who was one of the best natured fellows in the world; and instantly despatched his clerk upstairs to bring down fifty each of the red, white and blue counters.

"Really this is too kind of you," said the stranger, "and I ought not to permit it. But I live just across the street, where I have lately taken a room, and a few friends are coming around this evening to have a little game. I used to play poker when I was a young fellow, and I don't think I've quite forgotten how. Thank you"—to the clerk as he placed the package of chips in his hand. "I will return them to-morrow morning. I am exceedingly obliged to you, I'm sure," and, bowing, he walked out of the store. The druggist watched him as he strolled leisurely across the street.

"Really an excellent fellow, and quite an acquisition," thought Thompson. "I'll consult with the fellows about asking him to make one of our game."

To which proposition "the fellows" found only scant objection.

"We must remember," said Dr. H., "that our game is really in violation of the law, and there is danger in admitting strangers. But if Thompson says it's all right, I've no doubt it is."

"Did he say he hadn't played since he was a boy?" asked Brown, with an air of comical eagerness.

"No, he didn't say that," said Thompson; "he said he used to play when a young fellow, and didn't think he'd forgotten how."

"Well, what's the difference?" said Brown.

"None in fact, perhaps, though there might be a great deal," answered Thompson, with a laugh. "We shall see."

It was not so easy to persuade the stranger to join the game. On Thompson's invitation to do so, he politely demurred, saying the gentlemen were strangers to him, and he should dislike to sit down to a game with men in whom he might have every confidence—and the fact that Mr. Thompson was one of them was, of course, sufficient to establish that—but with whom he was not on terms of cordial intimacy. Thompson, however, continued to press his invitation, and at last the stranger, whose name was Roberts, allowed himself to be persuaded. He was introduced to the game and made himself exceedingly agreeable by losing with the most perfect good humor. There was but one drawback. He was not particularly skillful in dealing, and was evidenly a novice in handling the "pasteboards." He would bet at times with great recklessness, and made blunders that cost him many a "pot." The doctor himself when he was not "in" on a hand would good-naturedly offer to coach him, and under his tuition there was a decided improvement in his play. Evidently he would learn after a time, they thought, but he was easy game as long as his novitiate lasted. His repeated assertions that his luck would change and he would get it all back destroyed any reproach of conscience they might otherwise have felt. He preserved the same perfect good humor, and in the intervals of dealing enlivened the sittings with a fund of anecdote which his powers of mimicry made vastly amusing. He became exceedingly popular and began to lose less often as he grew more cautious in estimating the value of his hands, and he continued to say that he would get back all his losses ultimately.

Of course, no one but himself really believed this. The time came, however, when they received a rude awakening. It would be difficult to say just how it all happened. But never in all their sittings had there been so furious a game, such a continuance of phenomenal hands, such miscalculation of chances, such rapid losses—all in favor of the stranger! If there is such a thing as being drunken with bad luck then Thompson, the doctor and Brown were all maddened and intoxicated by the series of misfortunes that followed hand after hand—all to the advantage of Roberts. It was utterly inexplicable when it was all over, but here are the resultant facts: Thompson had lost $500, Brown $800, and the doctor nearly $1,500—these amounts approximately, and the stranger, of course, had got it all.

The doctor had given his I.O.U. for $500, and the stranger tossed it over to him at the conclusion of the game. The doctor drew a check from his wallet, filled it out for the amount, and signed it.

"Excuse me," said the stranger, with one of his most ingratiating smiles, "but will you, Mr. Brown, kindly endorse that check, and make it payable against your own account?"

The others stared in amazement. Where were the liberality, the courtesy, the confidence he had manifested on every previous occasion? The doctor flushed angrily, but he handed his check to the wealthy contractor, who readily enough endorsed it, though not without a protest as to the doctor's good faith and credit.

"Oh, I assure you I do not doubt it," said the stranger, "but as two heads are better than one, so are two signatures upon a check," and he placed it leisurely in his pocket.

"I told you I'd get it all back," he said, as he bade them good-night. "What a streak of luck I did have, though!"

When he was gone the others sat and stared at one another.

"Well, we have been buncoed," said the doctor.

"Do you really think so," queried Thompson, who feeling himself responsible for having introduced the stranger to the game, was inclined to enter a faint protest.

"I have no doubt about it," answered the doctor. "Did you notice that he handled the cards like an expert?"

"That is true," said Brown, dolefully, "now that you recall it."

"That his nervousness had disappeared?"

"Yes," faintly assented Thompson.

"That he made none of his usual blunders during the entire game?"

"Yes, that is true," said both Brown and Thompson, with their heads bowed in profound reflection.

"Then," said the doctor, sadly triumphant, "does not the case point to a game of bunco?"

And to this there was no reply.

"But I can at least stop the payment of that $500 check in the morning," said Brown.

Promptly at 10:15 the next morning Brown was at the bank to stop the payment of the check. But more promptly at 10:05 the stranger had preceded him, and departed.

Six months after Thompson was behind the prescription counter, his clerk at the forward case. Thompson heard a familiar voice saying: "Can I buy some poker chips here?"

He peered from behind the partition; it was Roberts. He strolled out with something like a scowl upon his face. Roberts greeted Thompson with his old time cordiality, as if nothing had happened to disturb their relations.

"Tell me how you did it," said Thompson, after a time.

"My dear fellow," said Roberts, "the exact *modus operandi* I cannot, of course, reveal. But between you and me, it was the softest crowd I was ever up against!"

PETER LIGHTFOOTS CLOCK

WELLS CATHEDRAL, England, contains one of the most interesting clocks in the world. It was constructed by Peter Lightfoot, a monk, in 1320, and embraces devices which testify to the ancient horologist's ingenuity. Several celestial and terrestrial bodies are incorporated in the interesting movement and relationship. They indicate the hours of the day, the age of the moon and the position of the planets and the tides.

When the clock strikes the hour two companies of horsemen, fully armed, dash out of gateways in opposite directions and charge vigorously. They strike with their lances as they pass as many times as correspond with the number of the hour. A little distance away, seated on a high perch, is a quaint figure, which kicks the quarters on two bells beneath his feet and strikes the hours on a bell. The dial of the clock is divided into twenty-four hours and shows the phases of the moon and a map of the universe.

An oddity in clocks is the invention of a Frenchman, Paul Cornu. It consists of a dial mounted above a reservoir and having a sort of seesaw mounted upon its support. The reservoir holds sufficient alcohol to last for a month, and this serves as fuel for a small flame that burns at one end. The heat from the flame causes the air to expand in the bulb of the seesaw directly above it. As a result the seesaw moves every five seconds. This movement is the sole motive power that actuates the clock.

SUBTERRANEAN NOISES IN AUSTRALIA

SOUNDS resembling explosions which could not be traced to any mining or quarrying operation are heard at intervals in the Daylesford district of Victoria, says the Australian Geological Survey. The sounds are described as resembling thunder, or the explosions made in blasting rocks. They may occur singly, or two may be heard in rapid succession, and more frequently in wet than in fine weather. The noises are said to come from a portion of the Yandoit hills, known as the Stony Rises, near a branch of the Green Gully Creek. The residents are of the opinion that they are caused by explosions of gas, and state that birds and rabbits which were supposed to have been suffocated by gas have been found dead in hollows.

This part of the parish of Campbelltown was not visited, but an inspection of the geological map of the parish shows that basalt has flowed down a branch of the Green Gully Creek, and remnants of the flow exist as a series of low hills. These trend down the creek, which may have eroded along the strike of the Ordovician rocks, or possibly along a fissure. Noises like those described by the residents of the district have been heard in many places in other countries, and are generally known as brontidi (like thunder); in India they are known as barisal (guns); in Mexico as bramidos (bellowings), in Italy as marina (sea shore).

It is not certain that the Yandoit noises are really brontidi, but it is not at all improbable that they are. The bearings taken indicate that the noises proceed from a part of the parish through which there apparently passes a line of weakness, the surface indications of which are a series of mineral springs, and on the southern extension of this line is a line of fissure eruption. It is possible that the noises originate along a fault line, that movements are yet taking place, and these cause the sounds.

There is another possible explanation, in that the locality where the sounds are heard is volcanic, since the part indicated by the bearings is within five miles of Smeaton Hill, or Mount Kooroocheang, an extinct volcano where faults are known. About ten miles south of the place where the supposed brontidi emanate, three extinct volcanoes, Eastern Hill, Mount Prospect and Langdon's Hill, indicate a line of fracture of the earth's crust. If this line be projected northward, it would pass close to where the sounds originate.

AN UNLUCKY SHOT

By INSPECTOR HOWARD HARRIS

THANKS to the hard work and energy of the Centralia Committee of Safety, lawlessness had now been almost abolished in that rapidly-growing settlement. The town was once a lawless mining camp in the West.

The method employed to bring this desired state of affairs about was of the simplest kind. When a deed of lawlessness was perpetrated, the committee, or its agents, invariably captured a noted crook, who either proved to be the guilty one himself, or else, through his knowledge of the movements of his kind, fastened the guilt on some of his brothers in crime. It mattered not much about evidence; if the slightest circumstance pointed to confirm the suspicions of his captors, there was short work made of the prisoner.

So it happened that, whether the innocent or the guilty suffered, the Centralians were always treated to a life for a life, and the evil-minded, thinned through death or desertion from a place where they could not hope to prosper, ceased to trouble the peaceably-disposed inhabitants.

Fully a year had been consumed in bringing the dangerous classes under, and there is no record of the number of executions. The committee itself did not escape, as may easily be supposed. They were the mark for hundreds, who felt aggrieved by their action, and out of the original twelve but five now remained.

But these five were the heroes of the hour, and when a full month had passed without so much as a shot being fired, or even an eye blacked, the inhabitants of Centralia bethought themselves that some mark of their regard and esteem should be shown the men who had brought their settlement up to such a high pitch of civilization.

Accordingly, a banquet was tendered the five surviving men, at which, under the influence of the good things spread around so lavishly, a proposition was made and unanimously agreed to, that, in consideration of the great services performed by their honored and courageous guests, the citizens of the town felt it to be their duty and their interest to secure the services of the committee, at an annual salary of five hundred dollars each—the twenty-five hundred dollars required to pay the five to be raised by equal taxation.

This was all very well, so far as the banqueters were concerned, but there was a subdued murmur by the outsiders, who, through poverty, or dislike of the heroes, on account of some of their questionable methods of justice, did not exactly fall in with the proposition. But the complaints, though deep, were not loud, and the five survivors of the committee, secure in their positions, strutted around like peacocks. Having nothing in particular to do, and being well paid for it, they became rough and overbearing, especially toward those who made objections to their elevation.

Six months or more passed in this way, during which time, by their wanton acts, they succeeded in forfeiting the good opinion of even some of their best friends.

In the meantime, peace had been undisturbed, a church and a school-house had been built, and a good-natured, old-fashioned Hoosier school-master installed in the latter. Harmless, meek and quiet as a lamb, seeking no friendship, living to himself, and content with his occupation, "Daddy" Dickson shuffled along, unnoticed and almost unknown. He was a man of gigantic figure, and still young, whose sole pleasure in life seemed to be to escape from the town in his leisure moments and bury himself deep in the woods, far from the gaze of any human being.

No enemy had he, unless the fat and genial Doctor Bland, who had often referred to him as "a romantic fool," could be considered one.

But the doctor was an unmistakable enemy to the "Board of Public Safety," as he called it, and determined, at any risk, to have it abolished as a needless and unnecessary expense, and as throwing undue powers into the hands of a few irresponsible men—one of whom, at least, he had good cause to consider as no better than he should be.

He brought to the public mind the fact that they never had a fire in the town before the formation of the fire department—having a department, it was necessary to find something for it to do—the consequence was that a number of mysterious fires occurred, which had never been followed to their sources.

Ah, yes, replied the public, but the committee found red-handed crime stalking abroad—they have grappled with and vanquished it—and we now enjoy the blessings of unbroken peace!

Very well, was the doctor's triumphant argument; they were useful in their day, but now, with crime trodden under, what was the necessity of keeping up the force? What were they accomplishing? What have they accomplished during the past year? Ah, yes, this was a view they had not taken, and they would consider it. So the question was canvassed, until our five nabobs began to realize that unless something was done to change the current of opinion, they were in a fair way of losing their handsome positions. Various were the plans devised, eagerly commented on and quickly rejected.

"None o' yer milk-an'-water dodges'll do, fellers," I tell ye," said Bill Graves, the king-pin hero. "Thar's too much of a dead set agin us, an' somethin' desprit, if anythin', must be did."

"Waal, then, why don't ye perpose somethin'? That's what we're hyar fur," came the petulant answer from the agitated crowd.

"Somebody must be got away with. We must show our usefulness, then, in follerin' up the crime!"

"The crime! What crime? An' how an' who's to be got away with?"

"Sh! Why, blame my eyes ef ye don't all appear to hev become reg'lar sucklin' innocents. A year ago ye warn't quite so squeamish. Durn me ef I ain't a'most ashamed o' yer company!"

"Waal, ef ye'll on'y speak yer mind out, you'll not find us so durn squeamish. Don't bite things off half-way, ef you want us to understand!"

"Few bites, then, an' hyar ye are: What harm would it do to wound the schoolmaster? What harm would it to do hand that noisy gallypot o' fat, the doctor? An' what harm will it do to draw lots fur to know who's to do the job?"

"Why, that's two jobs. The poppin' o' the school-master's easy enough, but the hangin' o' the doctor, eh?"

"Uv all the consarned lot o' idyits I ever sot eyes on' ye're the wust. Why, we'll capture the doctor an' fasten the shootin' onto him. He'll be hanged accordin' to law, an' our greatest enemy'll be then out o' the way—see? As fur the school-master, well, about him, nobody'll miss him, an' it'll on'y be doin' him a benefit to get him out o' the town—the poor feller's crazy, anyway! Then the usefulness o' the committee'll be seen at a glance, an' we'll live long an' flourish."

The eloquence of Graves was overpowering, and his plan the most charming one presented, so the five worthies immediately swore to be bound by its provisions, and in less than five minutes Joe Cain, a well-dressed, clean-shaven, clerical-looking fellow, won the chance to send poor Dickson on the disappearing trip.

On his regular afternoon stroll that day, the school-master, while gathering some curious pebbles by the side of a little brook that ran through the thick wood, miles outside the town, was startled to his feet by a movement in the undergrowth. Looking quickly in the direction of the sound, he saw a pair of steady eyes and an extended arm, pointing a long pistol directly at his head. Barely had he time to note the fact, when the trigger was pulled and the charge lodging in his left breast, he fell backward in a lifeless heap, without a groan. The frame-up had unexpectedly developed into a tragedy.

At the same time a shrill cry of terror resounded through the woods.

"Furies, then!" said Cain, to himself; "I have been watched. But that cry is your death-knell, whoever you are!"

So saying, he bounded forward toward a wagon road that had been cleared in the woods, and beheld the figure of a boy, apparently about fifteen years old, who ran, making the woods ring with his warning cries.

"Stop, you yelping devil—stop, or I'll blow the top o' yer head off!"

He fired. The boy tripped and fell, and soon the murderer was up with him. Gazing into the boy's face for an instant, Cain dropped his pistol on the ground in horror and amazement. The boy was his own son, and he had witnessed the deed. The fall had saved the boy's life, and he was uninjured. On discovering this, the father, with the most horrible imprecations, tore off the jacket of the boy, and, catching up a stout young limb, gave him a most terrific beating for daring to be in the vicinity, and for leading him such a chase.

"But for you," he said, "I could have caught the murderer! You, you alone are here to baffle justice! Now the doctor has escaped! You saw the doctor—Doctor Bland—about here, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, without hesitation.

"That's right, now come back until I gather the evidence against him. I shot at the doctor when you screamed and distracted my attention."

When they arrived near the body, Cain directed his son's attention to the fact that the doctor's long hickory stick, with the initials, "J. B." engraved on the handle, lay beside the fallen man.

"Oh, father!" said the boy, in a tone of agonizing entreaty, "you will not accuse the doctor, surely, for your own act?"

"What!" roared Cain, tapping the pocket in which his pistol lay; "would you dare accuse me? I have a mind to treat you like a dog!"

"Why not leave it as it is and accuse nobody?" pleaded the boy.

"Down on your knees!" hoarsely commanded Cain—"down on your knees, and swear that you will never reveal what you saw to-day! Swear by the ever-living God!"

"Promise first that no innocent man shall suffer for the crime."

"Down on your knees and swear!" was the only answer, accompanied by a threatening movement.

The boy dropped on one knee, and, with clasped hands raised, groaned:

"I swear!"

Centralia was stirred to its inmost depths at the recital of the dread tale that evening, though the fact that the guilty doctor had escaped did not speak too well for the efficiency of the committee.

The fastening of the crime on him, however, was a feather in their caps, that they made the most of. Later it was discovered that the body of Daddy Dickson was missing. The murderer and the murdered both missing!

It was plain, then, that the object of the doctor was to gain a subject for dissection, and, with a boldness past belief, had actually returned to carry his victim off!

Nearly a month had elapsed, and no clue to the whereabouts of Bland.

At length, one bright morning, Doctor Bland drove smilingly into the town, and was immediately arrested. He denied the charge, and challenged the production of the body! This, to those who believed in the dissection theory, was a refinement of trifling with justice that they could not stand, and a clamor was raised for his immediate execution.

"Hold on, gentlemen," he shouted; "if you cannot produce the body, I can. Daddy Dickson, stand forth!"

A tall, thin figure, wrapped in a loosely-folding shawl, silently stepped forward to the center of the room. Allowing the shawl to drop, he stood bare-headed before the assembly, pale as a visitant from another world.

The hearts of the spectators stood still as he slowly turned his gaze over the assemblage, and then, raising a long and bony finger, pointed it menacingly at Cain, whose eyes were glued to the apparition.

"Take him away!" roared Cain, in agony, "and I'll tell all!"

The Committee of Safety, feeling very unsafe, now rose to go.

"Secure them!" cried Cain; "they are guilty as I—I, who did the deed!"

"Secure them!" echoed the doctor, and a hundred hands were turned against the favored five. Young Cain had spoken the truth when he acknowledged seeing the doctor in the woods on the day of the crime. He was on his way to visit a patient on the outskirts, and had passed through the wagon road an hour before. Knowing that he would return within a short time, the boy, on being dismissed by his father, who went in another direction, made up his mind to save the doctor by giving him warning. This he did, but no explanation could be gotten from him. The doctor, however, insisted upon visiting the body, in the hope that his services might be of some avail.

This was fortunately the case—a spark of life remained, though so feeble that the utmost skill was required to fan it to a flame.

Lifting the body into his wagon, after the proper remedies had been applied, he returned to the Woodland house, where his services were required that day, and nursed his patient to health, relying on the friendly people there to keep him concealed.

The Committee of Safety was disbanded, arrested, and young Cain is now Dickson's assistant in the conduct of the Centralia Academy.

STORIES OF GREAT DETECTIVES

BY A NEW YORK JOURNALIST

The writer has had occasion professionally to learn a great deal about the real detectives. He has talked with them, corresponded with them, heard the narrative of their lives and exploits, and enjoyed in reality all the interest and excitement connected with these men that is constantly presented in the fiction of the day.

For the benefit of the thousands of readers of "Mystery Magazine," we propose to relate some of our experiences, and give a rapid glance at the most noted men in the different cities of the United States. The number of professional detectives is now very large. They are employed in every branch of the United States Government; all the great cities have a trained force, and the private agencies are to be found in all the cities, with correspondents throughout the civilized world. Our "Stories of Great Detectives" give, perhaps, the first familiar relation ever attempted of the characteristics of the great detectives who have made the detection of crime a new science.

GEORGE NEWBERRY

PRIVATE detectives are now to be found in all the leading cities. Such cities as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago have many well-established agencies, and no place of any importance can now do without them. Mr. Newberry was prominent in the business in Detroit, Mich. He wrote to us that "The Martha Whitla murder case had been attracting considerable attention for about two years."

Said the Detroit *Post* about this mysterious case:

"On March 12, two longshoremen found the body of a woman wedged in between the piles of Jones' dry-dock, in Springwells. Subsequent investigation by the authorities disclosed the fact that the arms were pinioned at the sides, the knees bent against the chest and fastened there, and a handkerchief, evidently used as a gag, bound across the woman's mouth; that a large piece of burlap formed a bag for the body and was fastened around it by means of a clothes-line; and the woman whose body was thus abused had come to her death by suffocation in consequence of having been thrown into the river by unknown persons with murderous intent.

"John Hammond and Acting Detective Hugh brought to this city John and Henry Theis, under arrest on charge of being the guilty persons. It is impossible to state now just how these two young men came to be regarded as the guilty parties. It is sufficient to say that the officers believed they had a strong case against them.

"The two men were brothers, and lived on a small farm a few miles south of Dearborn, in Taylor township. The dead woman, Martha Whitla, first became acquainted with the Theises through the son John, while she was working at the house of a farmer named Tuttle, near the village of Dearborn.

"It is alleged to have been through his influence that Martha finally went to work at his father's house, and while there formed an engagement of marriage with John Theis. The theory of a motive for this terrible crime, which they allege to have subsequently committed, is found by the officers in the disinclination of the members of the Theis family to have John marry her, and the positive character of the girl who had the grit to compel marriage. The actual commission of the crime is believed to have been about the 12th of January, when she was last seen by her friends alive. She was in the habit of coming to this city with the Theises, and, while they transacted their business, she would visit at the house of a Mrs. Nelson Canten. She left there on the 12th of January, and is said never to have been seen alive by her friends since."

J. H. MOWATT

ALL over the United States J. H. Mowatt, of Boston, was known as the great railway detective. He was good at anything, but particularly in this branch of work.

One day a train was on its way to St. Mary's, a station on the Indianapolis and St. Louis Railway. A dirty-looking tramp crawled under two of the seats.

"I must hide for a while—ha, ha!" was the thought and chuckle of the man, as he crawled as far back as possible.

"Tickets—ticket!" was now the cry of the conductor, as he entered the car.

He prided himself on his speed in collecting tickets. So he took them right and left, crying, as he advanced:

"Tickets—show your tickets."

Then the door slammed.

"Sharp fellow," whispered the tramp. "It is as easy to beat him as fallin' off a log."

When the train was near the station the conductor again passed through the car.

He saw a foot protruding from under a seat.

He made a single bound to the place and began to pull at the foot.

"Tryin' to steal a ride," he cried out. "You slacker, pay your fare right off."

"Can't do it," replied the tramp, now on his back at full length in the passageway.

"Then I'll fire you off at the next station."

"Haven't a red."

"Confound you and all your tribe. I ain't often beat in this way. By Jove, in these days a conductor's got to search every car."

By this time the tramp had pulled himself up by the seats, and stood looking about in a half-drunken sort of way.

He was certainly a very forlorn-looking object.

His clothes were ragged and very dirty. His face was the picture of melancholy, and as he gazed about through his half-closed eyes, every line of his countenance seemed to say:

"Pity the sorrows of a poor tramp."

But the conductor was full of wrath rather than pity. He seized the man by the shoulders and pushed him in no gentle manner toward the door. The tramp made some show of fight, but he was pushed outside.

"Here's St. Mary's," cried the conductor, as the train rolled up to the station.

The cars had not stopped when the tramp was hurled from the train.

"He's a beat and a tramp," said the conductor, as the bystanders seemed surprised at his violence. "Look out how you steal a ride on my train again."

He gave the tramp a final kick, and hurried off to attend to his business.

"My plan has worked first-rate," was a quiet and rather strange remark of the tramp.

In fact this man was J. H. Mowatt, the detective.

Obstructions had been placed on the Indianapolis and St. Louis Railway at this point, a passenger train had been wrecked, and the engineer and fireman killed.

Detectives had been employed in the matter, without success.

Then Detective Mowatt was requested to come on from Boston.

He reached St. Mary's in the disguise of a tramp, with a theory in his mind as to who the guilty parties were.

Not long after he was fired off the train a man came up to him.

"Bad luck, stranger," he said, sympathetically.

"Bad—bad," cried the tramp. "What chance has a poor devil, anyway, agin these 'ere corporations? Never you mind. I'll git even with this 'ere railroad, ef I go to prison fer it."

The first man was now joined by another. They exchanged winks when they heard the threat of the tramp.

"Stranger, I'll treat. Come to the saloon across the way," said the second man.

The three men went off together. The tramp continued to denounce the railroad. One drink succeeded another. He found that the two men were discharged section men. They were also filled with wrath against the company. Finally one of them said:

"We are goin' to work in a harvest-field down the road a piece. They'll take on another hand."

"I'll go," replied the tramp.

His secret thoughts were these:

"I'm on the right track. These men have revealed enough to make it my business to stick to them."

After another drink all around, the three started for the harvest-field. The drinking and carousing went on for several days.

During this time the tramp was invited to join in an attempt to wreck a train. He also discovered that these same men had made the previous attempt. He consented to join, and all the plans were prepared for another railroad slaughter.

At the right moment Detective Mowatt informed the railway officials, and the section men were captured in the act.

They were tried and sentenced to State prison for life.

Such was the sequel to the firing out of a tramp on the Indianapolis and St. Louis Railway.

Mr. Mowatt's career as a detective has been full of just such adventures. He was a brave and shrewd man, and entered upon all the schemes necessary in the detection of crime on railroads with great zest. He has worked as conductor, brakeman, fireman, and switchman in the yard; also as brakeman on a freight-train, and section-hand on the track, so as to be able to bring the guilty parties to justice. He was born in the State of New York.

Detective Thomas's exploits will be published in the next installment of this series. Don't miss this true story!

SLEEPLESS EYES

ALL fishes which sleep do so with their eyes open, as they are not provided with eyelids, and cannot, therefore, close their eyes. From experience made it was discovered that some fishes have no preference for the night time, but sleep equally well during the day, says a writer in the *Post-Intelligencer*," of Seattle.

They may be observed resting quite motionless for periods, apparently in sleep, except that, having no eyelids, they are unable to close their eyes to exclude all influences from without.

The hare also sleeps with its eyes open, for the simple reason that its eyes are unprovided with eyelids. Instead of these there is a thin membrane which with certain birds folds like a curtain in the corner of the eye, and, by an instantaneous action, flies back when sight is required, leaving the eye immediately and fully open for the exercise of sight.

Some birds, such as the eagle, also have this membrane, which, when at rest, lies in the corner of the eye, folded up like a drawn curtain.

THE NATIONAL DISH OF MEXICO

AMERICANS have gained the impression that the national dish of Mexico is chile con carne, a hot composition of peppers and meat. Americans also hear much about frijoles and tortillas, the first being a preparation of beans boiled and then fried, and the second being a preparation of corn meal cakes somewhat resembling griddle cakes.

But if one asks a Mexican what is the national dish of his country he will no doubt answer "mole de guajolota." Though Mexican cooks show individuality in the preparation of mole de guajolota, it is usually a combination of raisins, almonds, peanuts, cinnamon, chocolate, "ajonjolin," cominos, anise, four or five different varieties of chiles, garlic, tomatoes and perhaps some other ingredients. These are thoroughly ground and mixed and put to stew in an enormous earthen bowl, with perhaps barely sufficient lard and water to leaven the mass properly, while it is left to stew for perhaps two or three hours. While it is stewing one or two turkeys are cut up into small pieces and dropped into the bowl to be thoroughly cooked in rich gravy.

It is said that the turkey cooked in this gravy gives to the "mole" a rich turkey taste, while the "mole" itself gives the turkey an unsurpassed flavor. In popular speech the long name of this dish is contracted to "molé," pronounced "mo-lay."

In Mexico City there is, or at least until recently there was, a firm doing a large business in cooking and canning mole, and it is to be found in all the high-grade groceries of the country. It has been urged in Mexico that an export trade might be built up for canned mole very much as a trade was built for French sardines, German bratwurst, Russian caviar, Scotch herrings, Oxford sausages, Italian tomato paste and Seville olives, and other articles of preserved food. An enthusiast on the subject of mole has stated that there is not the slightest doubt, but that it would "take big" in the United States and England.

It is a dish so entirely toothsome that there is not the remotest fear but what the people of the big cities would be most enthusiastic about it, and that it would have as great a vogue as did chile con carne, tamales, chile sauce and Hungarian goulash.

A DETECTIVE'S MISTAKE

A Serial Story

By GILBERT MACKEY

CHAPTER ONE

THE BROKEN BANJO

FIVE lusty voices singing a negro melody to the twanging of five banjos and to the time of tramping feet. It was ten minutes after twelve o'clock upon the night of October 3, one of those clear, calm, starlit, autumn nights, the most beautiful of the year. The scene is that broad and well-known street, Peck Slip, upon the block between Water street and Pearl. Five gay, young roysterers, all neatly dressed, and evidently gentlemen, each strumming a banjo, join in the chorus, as in regular military step they march through the deserted street, strangely hushed and quiet after the bustle of the day.

"Get away! Tum, tum, tum! Get away! Tum, tum, tum! Get away! Tum, tum, tum!" The one grand final twang of all five banjos at the hands of the entire crowd. The policeman who patroled his solitary beat up and down the slip and around the Fulton Market heard the sound, and with a muttered "Begorra, the byes are enjying thimselves, so they are!" obligingly looked another way.

The worn, tired workers in the tenements upon the north side of the slip heard it, and turning over in their beds dreamt that they were boys again, and free from care and toil. The sailors on the decks of the schooners and fishing-smacks anchored about the fish-market heard it, and stopped to listen, for next to the lapping of the waves the twang of a banjo is the sound of all sounds dearest to a sailor's ear.

And so the five jolly young fellows tramped through the slip toward South street on their way homeward from a little evening's entertainment at a well-known club uptown, twanging their banjos and singing negro melodies, young, happy, careless and free.

Alas for the brightness—the careless freedom of youth! The one precious gift of all the many gifts God has so bountifully bestowed! It is as nothing to us when we possess it; it is never missed until it is gone—gone never to return. Sing on, boys! Sing right merrily! Twang your banjos. Enjoy yourselves while you may. For two of you at least from this time forth youthful happiness will be a thing of the past, and boyish freedom known no more.

As the boys continue their march along South street toward the Williamsburg ferry—for all five are residents of that portion of the great city of Brooklyn—let us glance at them and learn who and what they are. We have called them all boys, but in this, perhaps, we are wrong. One at least among them, having attained the age of twenty-eight, may be surely termed a man. He is a young and exceedingly successful police detective, Simeon Scudder by name, by his friends usually known as Sim. For the others—we will particularly describe only those who bear relation to this tale.

There is Andy Fenn, aged nineteen, clerk for a broker in dye-stuffs and Spanish-American woods; Maurice Barrytown, aged twenty-two, one of those mysterious fellows that every one knows in New York who never seem to do any work, are known to have no means, and yet whose pockets are always filled. Then there is Hen Spencer; but stay, we have nothing particular to do with him—it is the remaining youth, Alfred, or Al, Constantine, with whom we shall have particularly to deal.

Of him there is but little to be said, except that his age is likewise somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty-two or three, that he is as fine trim-built young fellow as one could ask to meet. He resides with his aged mother, of whom he is the sole support; his business is that of a reporter on an evening paper, hence at this hour his daily task is done.

There you have the crowd, reader, the whole five of them, and by this time they have reached the Roosevelt street ferry, and have just started on a race across the open square, after a boat about to leave the slip upon its up-river trip to the Williamsburg shore.

"Come on, fellers! Last one at the gate pays the fares for the crowd!"

"Yah! yah! yah!"

Again with a shrill cry those youthful voices break the stillness of the night. All five start for the ferry-gate upon the dead-run. Al Constantine is the last to reach it; he is consequently in for the fares. As he lays the requisite change on the ticket-window, a ring upon the boy's finger of most peculiar shape and pattern catches the light of an overhanging lantern, and reflects it back into the faces of his companions who press close behind him. The ring itself was dull enough, being neither of gold or silver, but of iron. The reflection came from the stone, which was most curiously carved in form of a seal, and was of a highly-polished, brilliant hue.

"Al hung back on purpose so that he might pay the fares and show his old Roman ring," said Andy Fenn, with a laugh; "he's as proud of that ring as a hen with one chicken; claims that it proves his descent from Alexander the Great, Socrates, Jehosophat, or some old duffer or another. Strike him on it, Scudder, and he'll fill you chock full of history in less'n three shakes."

"Shut up, Andy," exclaimed the young man, laughingly. "You know about as much of ancient history as my eye. When you talk, talk of something you understand."

"All five fellows, grasping their banjos, had made a break for the boat, and dashing through the gate, caught the Nevada just as she was leaving the slip.

"By George, I'm pegged out. Let's go inside, fellows, and sit down," said Maurice Barrytown, opening the door of the 'Gent's Cabin,' and leading the way. "We'll have a parting smoke before we adjourn for the night, and you can all try my cigars once more."

The young men flung themselves upon the cabin-seats,

their banjos resting upon the floor between their knees, while the speaker passed around the cigars.

"Let's have a look at that iron ring of yours, Al," said Sim Scudder, the detective; "I've always taken a deep interest in such things. Is it a real antique?"

Slipping the ring from his little finger, the young man passed it to his friend, who examined it with attention.

"Yes, it's genuine," he said at last. "Byzantine, I should say."

"Yes, Constantine V. It's of the tenth century, and has been in our family ever since."

"The deuce! Your name is Constantine, too. You don't mean to tell me that you are descended from the Byzantine emperors of the East?"

"Yes, I do," answered Al, proudly. "We trace our family back for a thousand years."

The detective regarded him with some surprise.

"What is the stone?" he asked, examining the ring still further.

"Lapis lazuli."

"And these letters engraved upon it? CONIX, and the rest?"

"This is the way it read," said the young man, leaning over Maurice Barrytown, who sat between himself and the detective, and taking the ring in his hand.

"CONST. That's the abbreviation of Constantine, the emperor's name. On one side, you will perceive, are the letters I C, on the other X C. That is what is called the monogram of Christ; it appeared upon all coins and royal gems belonging to the emperors of the East. This was the royal seal."

"Well, it's a great curiosity," said the detective, as the young reporter again put the ring upon his finger. "If that was mine, a thousand dollars would be no inducement to part with it."

"I should say not. It would take a good deal more money to purchase this ring, my dead father's parting gift, from me. But excuse me a moment, fellows. It's fearfully close in the cabin. I believe I'll step out on deck and take a look at the night."

In moments of danger strange warnings are sometimes vouchsafed us.

For some utterly unexplainable reason Al Constantine experienced a most singular sense of horror creep over him at the very moment in which he mentioned his father's name. Was it a warning of what was to come, transmitted from that dead father to his only son? We cannot say. We are not superstitious, and know nothing of such matters at all; we can only relate the facts in this strange case as they have been related to us by those who were familiar with them at the time they occurred.

Picking up his banjo, Al Constantine hastily left the cabin, and, passing through the door, began pacing up and down the after-deck of the ferry-boat, under the light of the twinkling stars.

He could see the deserted wharfs of the New York shore, close to which the boat was now running; he could see the shipping, the grim warehouses filled with valuable goods, the rows of street lamps which lined South street, and extended up the cross-streets here and there; and leaning over the rail, he could hear the swish of the great paddle of the boat itself, and yet with all this to attract his attention and divert his mind from that suffocating feeling of horror, the strange sensation still remained.

Now, the run up the river on the Roosevelt street ferry, as every one knows, is a long one at certain stages of tide. Such being the case, both drivers and occupants of automobiles and business wagons often leave their respective vehicles and walk about the boat. The after-deck of the ferry-boat Nevada was now completely deserted, save for the presence of the young reporter himself, nor were there vehicles in the intermediate space between the cabins allotted for their use, save a taxi, which looked as if it had seen better days. The chauffeur had evidently left his seat and gone forward, for nowhere was he to be seen.

More from the spirit of unrest than for any other reason, Al Constantine passed the taxi and glanced at it. As he did so, the head and shoulders of a man were thrust from the window, and a thick, drunken voice pronounced his name.

"Hello, Al!"

The occupant of the taxi was a man of perhaps twenty-five or six. He was elegantly and fashionably dressed. His fingers were ornamented by several valuable rings—a decided display of bad taste—a cluster diamond pin occupied the central place in his scarf. Upon the person of this convivial individual there was exposed jewelry to the value of a thousand dollars at the very least, and as he was evidently very far advanced upon the road to complete obfustication, it offered a most tempting bait to thieves. Al Constantine regarded him with an expression of disgust.

"Drunk again, I see," was all he said.

"No, no, not drunk, old boy—only a little. Come, 'er wanter talk at yer—d'ye hear?"

"I want nothing to do with you, Edson Gaylord, and, what's more, I have no desire to hear anything you may have to say."

"Oh, you go ter—grass! I'm as gooder man as you, and a blame sight better, in spite of your saintly, priggish ways. At all events, I've won the race, and you're left miles behind."

"Edson Gaylord, what do you mean?"

"Ah! I thought I'd interest you—you see I have—I've scooped in Jennie Dorris, Al, old boy, and at the same time have scooped you out. Ta! ta! don't cry, you'll get over it in time."

With face as pale as death, Al Constantine made one stride toward the door of the taxi. Inclosed, as they were, between the engine-room and the cabin, the young men were not only almost in darkness, but, in the absence of the chauffeur, entirely removed from both sight and hearing of every one upon the ferry-boat.

"What do you mean, you drunken hound?" he exclaimed, with one quick movement, jerking open the door of the taxi and thrusting his face close to that of the man within. "Speak but one word, mention the name of that young lady again, and I'll break every bone in your drunken hide!"

"Hello! What the mischief ails you? Ain't a man—er got—erright—speak of his promised wife? Sorry for your disappointment, old boy, but Jennie Dorris promised to marry me only this afternoon."

"Ed Gaylord, you lie!"

"Oh, no, I don't!" You're mad, you are—jealous—green with envy—you don't know what you say. Ah, you orter see her! Yum, yum! Oh, Jerusalem! what an ankle, what a foot! Don't you wish you had her, eh? I tell you she's a daisy, she's——"

The sentence remained unfinished. Had the taxi-driver at that precise moment been in his seat, he might easily have distinguished the sounds of a mortal struggle between two strong men within the automobile which he drove. An instant later Al Constantine, with pale face and torn, disordered clothes, flung open the cabin door and joined his friends within the gentleman's saloon.

"Why, Al!" exclaimed Andy Fenn, his particular friend and chum, "where in the world have you been, old man?

What's gone wrong? We began to wonder what had got you, and Barrytown has just gone out to look—here he comes now—but what's the mater? You look as though you had had a fight."

At the same moment Maurice Barrytown entered the cabin.

"Where were you, Al?" he asked. "I've been looking for you all over the boat—we're almost in."

The young reporter sank into a seat by the side of Sim Scudder, the detective, who also solicitously inquired of the cause of his strange appearance and extreme agitation of mind.

"It's nothing—nothing, boys," he muttered, hollowly, burying his face in his hands. "Don't ask me what has happened, for I've nothing to tell."

The detective, true to his professional instincts, eyed the young man narrowly.

His clothes were badly torn, one tail of his frock-coat having entirely disappeared. His face was scratched, and had evidently been bitten. His hands were smeared with blood. At that moment the boat entered the Williamsburg slip, the rattle of the winding chains could be heard, and a moment later chugging sounds from the carriage-ways of the ferry-boat. It was the noise of an automobile rolling from the boat to the street.

"Come, boys," said Barrytown, seizing his friend—who seemed utterly dazed—by the arm. "We're in, and must get him ashore somehow. What the mischief can have happened to him? There was not a soul out on deck, nor any one in the ladies' cabin either. See, his banjo is broken all to pieces—looks as though he had used it to crack some fellow over the head."

The parchment of the banjo which Al still held was broken, and the strings were all severed. The head of the boy still remained buried in his hands. He seemed utterly lost, and unable to make an intelligible reply to a single question of the many plied by his friends.

"What can have happened?" exclaimed Andy Fenn. "Why, this is terrible. A moment ago Al was as full of life as any of us, now he comes in completely broken up, his banjo bursted, his——"

"Yes," said Sim Scudder, quietly—he had been examining Al's person from head to foot—"his banjo is broken past redemption, boys; his face is cut and scratched, his left coat-tail torn off, his wits gone, heaven knows where, and what may perhaps concern our friend more than all, is the fact that he has lost the ring of the Constantines—the emperors of the East!"

All looked at the hand of the boy. The antique iron ring had disappeared.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MYSTERY OF THE TAXI-CAB.

"COME," said Sim Scudder, "whatever has happened, I can see no use in our parleying here. Let us get him ashore and take him home, or, better still, to some drug-store first, and see what can be done to bring him back to his senses, which appear to have been sent wandering, heaven knows where."

Meanwhile, Al Constantine sat with his head resting upon his hand, gazing off into vacancy.

Andy Fenn took him tenderly by the arm, and motioned to him by a gentle pressure that he must rise to his feet.

"Come, Al," he said, gently. "Come, old boy, the boat is in; we must be moving."

With a start and a shiver the young man raised his head, and looked wildly around.

"Is that you, Andy?" he muttered, in a hollow voice. "I thought—I thought—I don't know what I did think. Come, let's go home."

The four young men gazed at him in deep astonishment. What in the world ailed the boy? It was more than they could make out. Sim Scudder taking one arm, Andy Fenn the other, they gently led him from the boat, and up the steep, paved roadway leading to the corner of Broadway and First street, just without the ferry-gate. He walked quietly enough, and with reasonably firm tread. That there had happened to him no physical injury it was easy to see. Whatever the trouble might be, it was surely mental, and terrible must have been its nature to reduce him to such a pass as this. Once upon the corner, and beneath the light of a street-lamp, Sim Scudder took his friend in hand.

"Al," he said, abruptly putting his hand upon his shoulder, "speak up, man; what's happened to you? You leave us one moment as full of life and fun as any of us, and you return the next in this condition. Tell us what happened to you; we want to help you if we can."

With a visible effort the youth shook himself like one trying to shake off some incubus—some overpowering load.

"Don't mind me, fellows," he said, slowly. "I can't tell you what happened—it's no use to ask."

"Did you meet any one out on the deck?"

"Were you attacked?"

"Did you have a fight?"

These uestions were plied upon the boy by Sim Scudder, Maurice Barrytown and Andy Fenn.

"I cannot tell you."

No other answer.

"You must have had a fight. How else came your coat-tail torn off, your banjo bursted?"

This from the detective.

"I have nothing to say."

"Don't bother him, fellows," said Barrytown. "Can't you see the boy is dazed? Let's go over to the ——— Hotel and give him a drink—that'll fetch him to himself."

"Agreed."

All five started up Broadway in the direction of the hotel named. Now, we do not want it understood that these young banjoists were a wild, dissipated, drinking crowd. They were nothing of the sort. They were not apostles of temperance, neither were they drunkards. They all liked a friendly nip when occasion seemed to require. There they stopped. That all had partaken of liquid refreshments upon this particular night was true. Nevertheless, not one of the five was in the least degree "the worse for wear."

It had been no drunken spree with them—simply an evening of harmless pleasure, nothing more. This made the mysterious condition of their friend even more perplexing than it would have otherwise been. As they passed up Broadway toward the hotel in question, they observed a taxi drawn up before a saloon, behind the closed doors of which a light could be seen still burning.

The sight attracted the attention of none of them save the detective at the time, although all five had occasion to recur to it later on, and even he thought nothing more of it than to mentally note the fact that this particular saloon-keeper was violating the laws by selling liquor behind closed doors after the midnight hour.

Evidently the driver of the taxi had gone in to take a drink. Could they have but known then of the mystery that taxi contained, and have acted upon it then, much

trouble for all concerned might have been spared. They thought of nothing but their strangely afflicted friend, and so passed on.

Continuing up Broadway to Fourth street, they turned to the left, and entered the door of Williamsburg's best known hotel.

Meanwhile, Al Constantine, during the entire walk, had not uttered a word.

"What'll you have, Al?" demanded Barrytown, leading the way to the bar.

Again that start—that strange vacant look about the eyes.

"I'm sure I don't know, Maurice," he muttered. "Where are we, anyway? Do we want anything more to drink?"

"Rye whisky," said Maurice to the bartender.

Then with a wink:

"Our friend is a little off."

"What do you want to say that for?" demanded Andy Fenn, in an angry whisper. "Do you want to make Al out a drunkard close home, here, where he is known? He was never drunk in his life!"

"That's all right, Andy," was the reply. "Look at him! He looks as though he had been on a tear for a week. Must explain his appearance somehow, don't you see?"

"No, I'll be blest if I do. Why say anything at all?"

"So I say," put in the detective. "Maurice, it strikes me you are a trifle fresh."

At this moment the bartender placed bottle and glasses upon the bar. All poured out a modicum of the whisky, while Barrytown poured for Al a good, liberal drink.

"There, get that inside your shirt, old man," he said, encouragingly. "It'll do you a world of good."

He showed no vexation whatever at the detective's remark. Al Constantine mechanically raised the glass to his lips and turned its contents down his throat. As he did so a shudder seemed to pass over his frame.

"Come," he said, stupidly. "It's time we were going home."

"Yes, but you must tell us what ails you, Al," remarked Maurice, kindly. "You must understand that it's for your good that we want to know."

"I can't tell you, Maurice—I can't tell you. Ain't that enough?"

"Did you meet any one out there on deck?"

"What if I did?"

"Well, I want to know."

"Maybe I did, and maybe I didn't."

"Did you get in a fight?"

"I won't say."

"How came your clothes torn?"

"It's none of your business!" replied the young man, fiercely. "I tell you once and for all, I've nothing to say."

The whisky—it was a liberal dose—was beginning to take effect.

Richard was rapidly becoming himself again.

"I think you had better tell us, Al," said the detective, quietly. "Without the least desire in the world to pry into your private affairs, my dear boy, you must see that it is only natural that we should want to know what has caused in you this sudden change."

"Sim, I don't want to be unkind nor secretive, but you, and all of you fellows, will do me a favor if you will question me no more. I've met with a blow—a terrible blow. For the time it unmanned me, that I must allow, but I'm better now, and want to go home."

"All right, home you shall go then," cried Andy Fenn, "and not a question shall be put to you until you get good and ready to tell all that happened to you out there on deck."

"That's right," said the detective. "Andy's hit it. You are broken up now, Al, and we won't bother you any more."

All passed out into the street, and leaving the hotel behind them, turned their steps once more toward Broadway.

"Say, Al, it's a long way up to Reid avenue to-night," said Andy Fenn, taking the arm of his friend within his own. "Why don't you come home with me?"

Now, the home of Al Constantine was in the eastern part of the city of Brooklyn, on Reid avenue, above De Kalb. Andy Fenn lived on Bedford avenue with his parents, who were well-to-do in this world's goods. Maurice Barrytown boarded in the next house to his. As for Henry Spencer, the fifth boy, and Detective Scudder himself, both lived a long distance from the ferry, and would be obliged to take a car.

"No, I think I had better go home," muttered Constantine. "My mother may be alarmed if I stay out all night. Moreover, I don't like to go to your house, Andy, in such a plight as this."

He pulled his coat around, and ruefully examined the torn tail.

"That don't matter—you can put on a suit of my clothes in the morning. Beside, you'll have to walk if you do go home. There'll be no car up Reid avenue to-night."

"By George!" exclaimed the detective, "if that's so I'll go back to the hotel, for I want a Reid avenue car, too, and bless me if I'm going to hoof it up there to-night."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, Sim," put in Maurice. "You'll just come home and bunk with me."

"All right—I'm agreeable—anything to oblige a friend."

"You'd better come with me, Al," said Andy. "You are in no condition to walk up-town to-night."

The words of Andy Fenn proved correct. Inquiry at the junction of Broadway and Fourth street proved that the last Reid avenue car had already gone. Thus it was decided that Sim Scudder should go home with Barrytown—that Al Constantine should do the same thing with Andy Fenn. Hen Spencer determined to go home at all events, bade his companions good-by, and started upon his lonely walk. The four moved up Fourth street toward Bedford avenue, saying but little to each other as they walked, Al Constantine saying nothing at all.

A change had come over the spirit of their dreams. They were no longer the gay young roysterers of half an hour before. Their voices were silenced, their banjos were carried silently in their hands. From that of Al Constantine's no music could have been obtained, even had he been so disposed. The parchment head was completely burst in, the strings hung close and broken.

Thus suddenly does the scene shift in this ever-shifting world of ours. One moment all is joyous, gay and bright. The next—and our mirth is hushed. All is gloom, darkness and despair.

Bedford avenue reached—that street of handsome mansions—for several blocks the four friends walked silently along. At length Barrytown paused before a stylish brown-stone house.

"Here's my ranch," he said, pleasantly. "Hope you'll feel all right to-morrow, old man, and forget this disagreeable business, whatever it may be."

He held out his hand and shook that of Al Constantine warmly. Sim Scudder did the same.

"And here's mine next-door," said Andy Fenn. "I see the governor's left a lamp burning for me. I'll get Al to bed at once, and he'll be all right in the morning, I'm sure."

"Good-night, Andy."

"Good-night, Maurice. Good-night, Mr. Scudder."

Andy Fenn was not quite as well acquainted with the police detective as were the rest. Shaking hands all around, Maurice Barrytown and Sim Scudder turned up one brown-stone stoop, Al Constantine and Andy the next.

Another moment would have seen them within their respective doors. Suddenly the sound of an auto was heard behind them, coming rapidly up the avenue in the direction of the place where they stood.

Now, in the crowded streets of the city, in broad daylight, when wagons, carts, carriages, and drays of every sort and kind are pushing and jostling to and fro, the simple sound of an approaching automobile would have amounted to just nothing at all. In the hush of the small hours of the nights it is entirely another thing. Then we are all attention if a single vehicle flies past. All four turned in the direction of the sound. A taxi-cab could be seen coming rapidly over the asphalt pavement. It approached the place where the young men stood, and drawing up beside the curb, came to a halt before the house adjoining that of Andy Fenn. The driver leaped from his seat and flung open the door.

"'Ere we are, sir," he said, loud enough for the listeners to hear. "This is No. 1002."

Was the occupant in the car asleep? He neither alighted, or made reply. Hardly knowing why he did so, the detective motioned to his friends to wait.

"Hold on a bit, fellers," he whispered. "Let's see who's in the cab."

"Nonsense!" muttered Maurice Barrytown. "I'll bet ten dollars it's only Ed Gaylord, brought home drunk again. He comes home in that condition three nights out of five."

As these words were spoken, it was observed by all that Al Constantine visibly paled, and gave a start ahead.

"The drunken beast!" he hissed between his clenched teeth. "The miserable——"

Suddenly he checked himself.

"Come, Andy," he murmured, beginning to ascend the stoop, "let's go in and get to bed."

"Hello! Al's got it in for Ed Gaylord!" exclaimed Barrytown, with a laugh. "Now, what in thunder has Ed done to you?"

The words remained unfinished on the young man's lips. Even had he completed his sentence, there would have been none to hear. At that precise moment there rang out a fearful cry through the stillness of the night—a cry which caused the peaceful occupants of the houses around—long ago, like good citizens, retired to rest—to start in horror from their beds and thrust their heads from every window upon the block, to learn why and from whence it came.

"Murder! murder! murder!"

It was the chauffeur. He stood shouting the cry of murder before the open door of his taxi. With a sudden spring the detective was by his side. The three remaining young men pressed close behind.

"He's did!" cried the man, wringing his hands and pointing within the car. "Howly mother! but me fare is did in me taxi! Luk, gintlemin. There's murder here!"

Upon the cushioned seat of the taxi lay the form of a young and elegantly dressed man. His eyes were closed, his face was the hue of death. His bejeweled shirt-front, from which sparkled a diamond cluster pin, was dyed with blood. Blood covered his legs and hands. Upon the seat of the hack it lay, a bleeding, ghastly thing—the body of a man murdered—murdered by the stab of a knife, which even now protruded from a wound in the side. It was the body of Edson Gayord, with whom Al Constantine had quarreled in that very taxi as it stood in the carriage-way of the ferry-boat, during the passage from New York to Williamsburg, and as such it was instantly recognized by each one of the four friends who now gazed upon the blood-stained form.

CHAPTER THREE

A MIDNIGHT INTRUDER

"MY God!" exclaimed Maurice Barrytown, drawing back in horror, "what fearful thing is this?"

"Ed Gaylord murdered!" gasped Andy Fenn.

As for Al Constantine, he uttered no sound, but stood staring dumbly at his late antagonist, who now lay before him stark and cold in death. The business instincts of Sim Scudder were called into play at once.

"Boys, there has been murder done here," he exclaimed, hurriedly. "This thing must be investigated—must be reported to the police. Ring Gaylord's bell, somebody, and inform the family; and as for you, you bellowing idiot, hold your noise and get out of the way."

The last remark was addressed to the taxi-driver, who was bawling murder at the top of his voice, and calling for the police like one possessed.

"But me reputaytion will be ruined! Murder done in me auto! Och, may the Blissid Vargin defind us! Sorra a man will be afther hiring it again!"

Maurice Barrytown ran up the steps of the Gaylord mansion and pulled firmly at the bell. At that same instant an upper window was raised, and a young man's head was thrust out. The owner of the head was evidently in his night-dress; more than this—it was apparent that he had been just aroused from sleep.

"What's the matter down there?" he demanded, crossly. "What's all that row about?"

"Come down, Will, you're needed here," said Barrytown, in a constrained voice.

"My God, this is terrible!" he continued, addressing himself to his companions upon the sidewalk. "Poor Ed! to be murdered in cold blood! What will Ella say?"

Ella was none other than the sister of the murdered man; and, we may as well add right here, Maurice Barrytown's affianced wife. Well-to-do and prosperous, without father or mother, the three Gaylords, Edson, William and Ella, occupied the house before which the taxi now stood. Chance and his close proximity had thrown young Barrytown in Ella Gaylord's way, and they had been affianced lovers for more than a year, waiting for the circumstances of the youth to improve—in short, waiting until he should "strike a job."

"It's horrible!" murmured Andy, turning away from the sickening sight with a shudder. "Good Lord! what's the matter with Al? Bless me! but the boy's going to faint!"

Scarcely had the words left his lips when the young man beside him reeled forward, with face white as chalk, and fell face foremost upon the sidewalk.

"The sight of all that blood is too much for him after what he has been through to-night," said Scudder, who, with Andy and Barrytown, had stooped over the lad and raised his head from the flag-stones.

"You'd better get him in, Andy, as soon as you can."

They raised his head and vigorously chafed his hands, while the detective, drawing a whisky-flask from his pocket, forced some of the contents down his throat.

With a choking gasp the young man opened his eyes.

"My God! my God! this is truly terrible," he muttered incoherently. "Edson Gaylord murdered, and I——"

Here his voice died away in a whisper. A strange wildness shone in his eyes.

"You're kind of broke up, old man," said Andy, sympathetically. "Here, lean on me—can you stand on your feet?"

"I—I think so," murmured the youth, heavily rising. "Andy, is he dead?"

"I'm afraid he is, Al."

"It's dreadful—dreadful!"

He leaned again a neighboring tree, his eyes turned away from the taxi-cab. At the same moment the door of the Gaylord mansion was flung open, and the brother of the unfortunate man appeared. His agony at the sight which met his gaze was heart-rending to the last degree.

Just then the policeman upon the beat came hurrying up. By the detective and the taxi-driver the situation was explained. The noise and excitement had not been without its effect upon the surrounding houses.

Windows were thrown up, men and boys rushed half-dressed from the doors and gathered about the taxi—a staring, eager, gaping crowd.

"We must take the body into the house," remarked the policeman; "we can't leave it here."

"One moment, officer," said Scudder quietly. He was in his element now. "I believe I was one of the first to discover this shocking affair. I'm attached to the detective force in New York. By your leave I'll examine the body of this unfortunate man—it may prove useful later."

He stepped within the taxi and coolly examined the situation by the light of one of the lamps which the driver held.

The body lay in a half-reclining position upon the cushion of the taxi—it contained but a single seat—the head being inclined slightly upward and outward, an expression of terror being imprinted upon the face.

The wound, which was in the left side, in the region of the heart, had been made by a knife of a somewhat unusual pattern—a deer's foot with the hair still attached to it, supporting a long shining blade.

This had been thrust by the murderer deeply into the breast of the unhappy man, where, sticking into the bleeding wound, it still remained.

The left hand of the dead man hung down by his side and was drenched in blood; the right rested upon the seat of the taxi, and was tightly closed about an object which glittered like silver in the light of the driver's lamp. It was the bass string of a banjo, and was wound round with silver thread.

Firmly grasped in the hand of the corpse, its ends could be plainly seen to have been unraveled, as though it had been violently torn from the instrument to which it had belonged.

"I'll take charge of these things, if you'll allow me, officer," said the detective quietly. "Here's my card."

"Indeed, I wish you would," replied the policeman, uneasily. "I'm not used to this murder business, and am blest if I know how to act."

Cautiously withdrawing the knife from the wound, Sim Scudder wiped it with a piece of paper, and wrapping it up, put it in his pocket.

He then removed the banjo string, and disposed of it in the same way.

The crowd which now pressed about the taxi was then forced aside, and by the policeman, the detective, and the heart-broken brother of the murdered man the body of Edson Gaylord was conveyed to his own apartment and the door shut in the face of the gaping throng. Slowly the crowd dispersed.

The policeman returned, jumped upon the box with the cab-driver, and drove off to the station to which he was attached to render his report.

Andy Fenn, Maurice Barrytown and Al Constantine were left alone upon the sidewalk before the house.

The latter still remained leaning against the tree in a most dejected attitude, his torn and soiled clothes giving him a most woebegone air.

Just then the detective joined them from the Gaylord house.

"Well, I'll be blest if this ain't a fine ending for a night's pleasure!" he exclaimed. "Just as I think I'll have a little quiet time to myself, here I am plunged into professional business again up to the eyes."

"It is horrible—simply horrible!" said Barrytown, with a shudder. "Poor Ed! How did Ella take it? Did you see her?"

"That's the sister?"

"Yes."

"She's heart-broken, poor girl. I left her in a dead faint."

Barrytown shuddered.

"Poor girl," he muttered. "I suppose I ought by right to go in and offer my assistance; but, by George, I can't do it to-night. Are you off to the station, Scudder, or shall we turn in?"

"Oh, let's go to bed by all means. A detective must sleep as well as any one else. I'll go to the station the first thing in the morning. Has Al got over his megrims yet?"

"No," said Andy. "He's as bad as ever."

"Well, you'd best get him to bed as soon as you can, Andy. I'd give a dollar to know what in thunder ails the boy. When you get him in bed see if you can't find out."

"Al!"

No answer.

"Al!"

Andy Fenn had touched him on the arm.

Still no answer.

"Al! Come, old man; let's go in and get to bed.'

He shook the youth gently.

Constantine turned his head and looked at him vacantly.

(To be continued.)

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CURRENT NEWS

FOUND TWO POTS OF GOLD

Two pots of gold and a skeleton were recently unearthed in San Francisco by G. W. Tyler, while conducting street-grading operations. The gold, in dust and nuggest, was worth about $500. The skeleton was believed to be that of some ancient Indian chief, as, in addition to the gold, many valuable trinkets, such as those with which Indians formerly decorated themselves, were found with the bones.

SAVED AFTER 12 YEARS.

High priced chinaware, rings, pieces of silverware and other articles of value which withstood the flames when a department store on one of the most prominent corners in the business district was destroyed by fire twelve years ago are being recovered from the ruins during the excavation work for a new business block. A whole unopened barrel of china dishes was recovered, only a few on the top being broken.

STENCHES AS DANGER SIGNALS IN MINES

The U. S. Bureau of Mines announces that it has developed a novel method for giving a danger warning in mines, particularly metal mines, in which compressed air is used throughout the workings. An ill-smelling substance is injected into the compressed-air line, and within a few minutes the odor is spread through all parts of the mine. A technical paper is to be published on this subject.

TAKES SON TO JAIL

When George Gibson of Catawissa, Pa., brought his sixteen-year-old son Alfred to the county jail he did it because he wanted to give the boy a lesson, but of the two the father was suffering the most, and when the steel doors were closed behind the youth the father burst into tears. The boy confessed to taking $5 from the store of H. E. Kearns & Son at Catawissa and was held in default of $300 bail for court.

WHISKEY STILL UNCOVERED

Less than a month after Ohio went dry, workmen engaged in excavating for a dancing pavilion on Croxton's Run, near Toronto, Ohio, unearthed a whisky-still of considerable capacity. It is believed to be fifty years since it was used. Jugs, bottles and the pipe leading to the "cooling off" barrel, that was situated near the run, were found, as was the worm used in the distillation process. The region is said to have been inhabitated years ago by moonshiners.

MYSTERY CLEARED

A thirty-year mystery was cleared up recently at the Hancock County Infirmary, Findlay, Ohio, when George Bailey found a butcher knife between two studdings in one of the walls of the abandoned building which is being torn down by order of the County Commissioners.

Thirty years ago an inmate of the institution cut his throat from ear to ear. No knife or sharp instrument was ever found with which the deed might have been committed.

According to the theory advanced after the discovery of the knife by Bailey, the suicide placed the knife on top of a beam and it fell between the studdings, where it remained for thirty years. The knife still retains its razor edge and is only slightly corroded.

PULLED OUT HIS OWN TEETH

An inmate of the lunatic asylum at Chalons, France, had the impression that his breath smelled so bad that no girl would accept him as a husband. Brooding over this totally imaginary defect, he decided that his teeth must be the cause of it. He abstracted a forceps from the surgeon's case and, when he found himself alone, carefully pulled out all his teeth. The wounds healed rapidly and the poor maniac confessed that the operation had been very painful.

FLOUR SACK OF MONEY

When a farm was sold in Maries County, Mo., recently, the transaction took place in the home of the farm's buyers, named Hoeller, and was strictly a cash transaction. After the deal had been closed every member of the family began bringing silver coins from nooks and crannies all over the house, where it had been secreted. The seller had to take his money in a flour sack to the bank, where it took the teller and cashier two hours to count it. Most of the money had been earned by two daughters taking in washing.

THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF SPITSBERGEN.

According to a note in Nature, the accessible coalfields of Spitsbergen are estimated to have a content of at least 4,000,000,000 tons of good steam-coal, and this region is destined to become one of the chief coal-producing countries of Europe. About 100,000 tons of coal were shipped from Spitsbergen to Scandinavian countries last year. Promising samples of iron ore have been received from this archipelago, other mineral resources of which include gypsum in enormous quantities, asbestos, copper ore, oil shale and probably free oil.

GETS LOST RING

To have lost and after six months recovered her $400 diamond and pearl cluster ring, is the experience of Mrs. Isaac H. Bloom, of Waynesboro, Pa. The jewel was recovered from a young lady residing in Greencastle, to whom it had been given by the finder. Mrs. Bloom last January lost the ring on a C. G. & W. trolley at Greencastle and did not miss it till after her arrival in Waynesboro. Mr. Bloom instituted an extensive search and advertised the loss widely. A party in Greencastle found it but did not return it. A few days ago a friend of Mrs. Bloom espied the ring on the finger of a Greencastle lady. The recovery soon followed.

PRICKLY PEARS AS FOOD

A recent contribution to the old question of using prickly pear as food for cattle takes the form of a bulletin of the Department of Agriculture of Bombay. The author describes experiments at the Government dairy at Kirdee, in which six bullocks were fed with a mixture of 10 parts of prickly pear to 6 parts of cotton seed at the rate of 72 pounds per 1,000 pounds live weight per day during six months. The spines, which form the well-known danger in feeding prickly pear, were burned off over a stove, after which the fodder was cut into small pieces by means of a chaff-cutter or a chopper. This experiment and others proved that a mixture of prickly pear and cotton will not only support life, but will restore half-starved animals to a good condition.

THE FIRST FAMILY HOTEL

The first "family" or "temperance" hotel in London, the forerunner of tens of thousands of such hostelries in all parts of the world, was opened in Covent Garden, 145 years ago.

An inn for the more or less permanent accommodation of families, and minus bar, was an undreamed-of thing, and other hotel-keepers laughed the project to scorn. Despite their derision, the scheme was successful, and made a snug fortune for its founder, David Low. London now has hundreds of family and temperance hotels, and before long the United States will have thousands of them.

The edifice in which Low started his hotel is still standing, and is now used for the boxing matches of the famous National Sporting Club. The building was erected early in the seventeenth century, and was originally the home of Sir Kenelem Digby.

STRANGE WELLS

A popular idea in Switzerland that some of the wells in that country are reliable weather prophets has been proved by scientists to be well founded. These wells, by some sort of pressure, not clearly understood, have the property of drawing in air at certain times, and of blowing out air at other periods. In order to ascertain definitely if there was any truth in the idea of weather prophecy the wells were covered, and a small opening was surmounted with a U-shaped pressure gauge. It was found that when the barometer rises the air rushes into the wells in a steady current, and when the barometer falls the air rushes out. The currents of air are definite and easy to perceive, even without the gauge. The general tendency of the weather is foretold with considerable certainty.

BOY'S TOES DROP OFF

The Newark police are investigating the unusual death of Orlando D. Martino, four years old, who died recently at his home, No. 180 Malvern street, Newark. The lad's parents say that on June 12, while he was playing on a dumping ground near his home, he sank to his knees in a bog. He was pulled out by companions.

His feet and legs were severely burned, and he was treated at St. Michael's Hospital. He went home, but returned to the hospital daily for treatment. The burns went deeper and deeper into his flesh.

According to Dr. George L. Warren, county physician, the boy's toes dropped off and his feet and legs shrivelled. All efforts to check the burns failed. The police believe that refuse from chemical plants was dumped on the ground.

FIRST WOMAN PHYSICIAN

The first woman physician in America was Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, who received the degree of M. D. at Geneva, N. Y., seventy years ago. Miss Blackwell was a native of Bristol, England, who came to America in her youth. When she was about twenty-one she determined to become a physician, but her application for admission was refused by nearly all of the leading medical colleges of the United States and Canada. A little medical college in Geneva, however, accepted her, and she became one of the most brilliant students of the institution. She suffered, however, from social ostracism in the town, as the Geneva hostesses regarded her either as insane or wicked. Miss Blackwell, after finishing her course, attended medical colleges in Europe, and practiced in several Continental hospitals. She then returned to New York, where she opened an infirmary for women and children and organized a woman's medical college.

LEGLESS MAN DRIVES CAR

Though he has no legs, Nat L. Milgram of Philadelphia motored to Altoona to thank friends for what they did for him when he was a patient in a hospital here two years ago. Milgram was a member of Col. George Kemp's 3d Regiment when it was sent to this section for guard duty just after the United States entered the war. While sergeant of the guard at Fairhope, Somerset County, he was run down by a train and both legs were crushed below the knee. He was treated at Cumberland and later at Altoona and then sent to his home in Philadelphia.

Equipped with artificial limbs, he walks very well. While driving to the home of Rabbi Moses J. S. Abels, not being familiar with the streets, he attempted to descend a steep avenue not used by autos, and his car was wrecked, but he escaped injury.

When Milgram returns to Philadelphia he will take up the study of law.

VIEWS HIS OWN GRAVE

Wilford G. Oakes, of Patten, Maine, who returned home after a remarkable record of service in the war as a member of a Canadian artillery regiment, had the experience, near Cambrai, of viewing his own grave, or that which was so designated, with his name inscribed on a rude slab over the last resting place. He took a snapshot of the grave as a souvenir.

Oakes was severely wounded several times, and passed through experiences of the most hazardous nature, but returned without apparent disfigurement, owing to surgical operations in British army hospitals. In one battle when he was wounded he lost his identification card and was hustled to a hospital more dead than alive. His jaws were shot away, making it impossible for him to communicate his identity, and as he was missing from his company his death was finally reported. Some soldier was buried under his name.

A surgical operation gave to him new jaw-bones, his tongue was sewed up and other disfigurements remedied, and to-day one has to examine his face carefully to find the scars.

When young Oakes enlisted in 1914 he was seventeen years old, but his discharge papers give his age as twenty-five years. This is, however, explained on learning that he was so anxious to enlist that he raised his age to gain admission. Oakes has been cited for bravery, and has received a medal of honor.

WHAT HAPPENED TO A CAT

If any one doubts that cats have nine lives, he will no longer do so after reading what happened to a Huntington, Neb., kitten. The story is vouched for by reliable witnesses and told by the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*. A kitten at the Great Northern Mills climbed into the inside rim of the big flywheel and fell asleep. The engineer did not notice the kitten when he started the engine in the morning, and for nine consecutive hours the little creature, held in its perilous position by centrifugal force, was whirled around and around on the giant flywheel at the rate of 90 revolutions a minute. It was still alive when evening came and the engine was stopped for the night. The kitten traveled the circumference of the wheel 48,600 times at lightning speed. Although alive, the kitten was in a stunned condition and was unable to stand on its feet, but a little nursing on the part of the millmen revived it, and it is now as well as ever.

BOY PHENOMENON

Completing an eight-year course of studies in exactly half that time, Ernest Burris Bingham, twelve years of age, son of Mrs. H. Ernest Bingham, of No. 110 South Kern street, Los Angeles, Cal., has made a scholarship record that has attracted wide attention.

Leaving the school of Our Lady of Loretto, Ernest will enter the Jesuit college in September on credits granted by the school and will plunge into a collegiate course.

Mrs. Elizabeth Lansing Burris, a first cousin of Secretary of State Robert Lansing, is the boy's grandmother. Although always remarkably studious, Ernest is athletic, rugged and strong.

The study of law has a great appeal for the boy, and he delights in delving into civil cases. He will try to enter a law office when he finishes his college course. At three years of age Ernest showed a lively interest in newspapers and at three and a half years he was able to read.

HIGH TEMPERATURES

The greatest field of research offered for scientists is experimentation with the higher temperatures. Between the temperature of the surface of the sun, estimated at 6,000 degrees Centigrade, and absolute zero, estimated at minus 273 degrees Centigrade, very little has ever been discovered. The field of research has been practically restricted to 725 degrees, or between the temperature of liquid air—minus 200 degrees—and the first visible red of heated iron—plus 525 degrees. We know that at a temperature of 1,000 degrees Centigrade, twenty-nine metals become liquid; at 1,069 degrees gold fuses; tungsten melts at 3,000 degrees; the temperature of the electric arc is 3,729 degrees, and here begins the great unknown in the world of heat. The hottest thing on earth is the electric furnace, with a temperature of nearly 3,730 degrees. In this intense heat even the diamond can be melted and boiled like water. But this is barely half way to the temperature of the surface of the sun.

CAN FISH HEAR?

Can the humble minnow or any of his larger brethren hear? He has ears, but are they any use to him? Some scientists have experimented and said "Yes," while others have experimented and said "No." However, recent study seems to indicate that fish do hear.

According to Popular Science Monthly, some of the fish experimented upon had their ears removed, and others had their skins made insensible. Then sounds were made in direct contact with the water, but without agitating it at all, and signs of hearing looked for. It was found that fishes are influenced by sound. One of the most peculiar and striking manifestations was the fact that a fish that had its hearing organs destroyed lost its sense of direction when swimming fast. It could swim straight slowly, but as soon as it attempted to put on speed it went round in spirals. Considering that many species of fish travel considerable distances during their periods of breeding and depositing their eggs, such loss of direction would tend to make them easy prey for their enemies.

"OLD GLORY"

The first to give the name of "Old Glory" to the flag of the United States was probably Capt. William Driver, a Massachusetts sea captain, who retired from the ocean and settled in Nashville, Tenn., shortly before the Civil War.

When that conflict broke out Capt. Driver displayed a flag—one which he had floated over his ship during his seafaring days—from the windows of his home. The banner was fired on, and the old skipper decided that he had better lower his colors and conceal them. The Confederate troops demanded that he give up the flag, but he refused, and, respecting the spirit of the daring old man, they left him in peace.

It was just fifty-seven years ago that Gen. Nelson appeared at Nashville with a division of the Union Army, and Capt. Driver offered him his flag to be hoisted over the Capitol. As it fluttered in the breeze, Capt. Driver exclaimed, "There goes Old Glory!" It was his pet name for the flag, and it was soon taken up all over the Northern States, and is now popularly used throughout a united nation.

ORIGIN OF THE NAMES OF STATES

Alabama—Indian, "Here we rest."
Arkansas—Named for a tribe of Indians.
Connecticut—Indian, "Long River."
California—Taken from a character in an old romance.
Colorado—Spanish, "Ruddy."
Delaware—In honor of Lord Delaware.
Florida—Spanish, "Blooming."
Georgia—In honor of George II.
Idaho—Indian, "A gem of the mountain."
Indiana—Indian's ground.
Illinois—Indian, "River of men."
Iowa—Indian, "Drowsy ones."
Kentucky—Indian, "At the head of the river."
Kansas—Indian, "Smoky water."
Louisiana—In honor of Louis XIV.
Maryland—In honor of Queen Henrietta Maria.
Massachusetts—"The place of great hills."
Mississippi—Indian, "Great father of waters."
Maine—The mainland.
Missouri—Indian, "muddy water."
Michigan—Indian, "Great lake."
Minnesota—Indian "Cloudy water."
Montana—Spanish, "A mountain."
New Hampshire—After Hampshire County, England.
New York—In honor of the Duke of York.
North Dakota—Spanish, "Allied."
North Carolina—In honor of Charles II.
Nebraska—Indian, "water valley."
Nevada—Spanish, "Snow-clad."
New Jersey—In honor of Sir George Carteret, Governor of Jersey Island.
Oklahoma—Indian, "Beautiful country."
Ohio—Indian, "Beautiful river."
Oregon—Spanish, "Wild Marjoram."
Pennsylvania—Latin, "Penn's woods."

SILK STOCKINGS OF GUN COTTON

Clad in stockings, ball gowns and lingerie made of artificial silk, Milady is encased in precisely the same material of which high explosives are made—gun cotton.

That there is no danger, however, that in the midst of a ball Milady may finish like a puff of shrapnel or the explosion of a shell was the positive assurance to the *United Press* of Count Hilaire of Chardonnet, the inventor of artificial silk.

At the age of eighty years the illustrious chemist and scientist has just been elected to the supreme honor of membership in the French Academy of Sciences for his discovery of how to put one over on the silk worms.

During the war he had been decorated by the French Minister of War with the Cross of a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor for discoveries relative to the manufacture of high explosives, growing out of his researches made primarily to render artificial silk stockings non-explosive.

According to Count Hilaire, his artificial silk, which is now produced by vast factories in Switzerland, Belgium, France, England, and the United States, has for its basis nothing less than gun cotton. One of the greatest problems he had to solve in perfecting it for everyday use was to render it non-explosive.

The gun cotton, under the Chardonnet process, is first dissolved in a mixture of alcohol and ether and then spun through fine capillary tubes by means of hydraulic presses.

Other chemical processes give it incombustible and non-explosive qualities, together with the consistency and the transparency of the finest silk from Japan or China.

It took just thirty years of the eighty which Count Hilaire has completed to perfect his discovery and render it of actual and practical commercial value.

A BRIDGE WITHOUT METAL

The natives of Java have a bridge-building technique which utilizes to the limit their slight resources for work of this character. Of raw materials they are acquainted with but two, and one of these is really a product of their own ingenuity. They have no nails, no iron, no true wood; they are forced to rely entirely upon bamboo for the structural parts, and upon a rope of their own manufacture to effect the junctures.

A bridge over a riger in the central part of the island is almost 150 feet long, and the width of the roadway some four feet. The four bamboo columns at either side of the stream are built up of a double length of from 50 to 60 bamboos, tied up with rope and firmly pressed together by forcing a quantity of wedges between rope and bamboos. Such columns are found to be of remarkable strength and elasticity; they are, in fact, used throughout the Dutch Indies as derricks for lifting roofpans when building sugar factories, etc.

The original element which the Javan natives have brought to the construction of these bridges, as remarked, is the rope. This is made of a fiber taken from the native aren-palm which grows all over the island. It makes a rope that resists effectively the heavy decaying action of the hot and damp tropical climate with its legions of fungi; in fact, it lasts for many years without any indications of rotting. So between this rope and the bamboo, the natives are able to achieve a semi-permanent structure for which it would be hard to find a peer on the ground of cheapness and durability. Perhaps the most surprising feature of the whole thing is the degree to which has been approximated the best type of bridge arch. How does an ignorant savage know that a bridge ought not to be built perfectly flat?

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A veteran business man, who was almost completely bald and had tried tonics, lotions, shampoos, etc., without benefit, came across an Indians' elixir by which he grew a complete crop of healthy, luxuriant hair that he now possesses. The hair elixir is called "KOTALKO." Others —men and women—have reported remarkable aid to hair growth, relief from dandruff, cessation of falling hair by using Kotalko.

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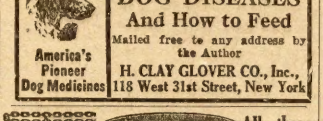

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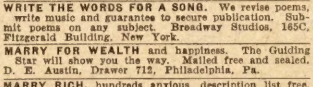

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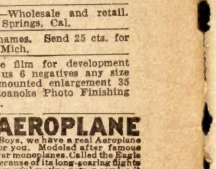

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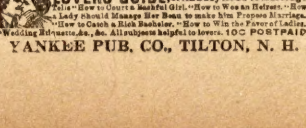

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